

THE REVOLT OF SUNDARAMMA





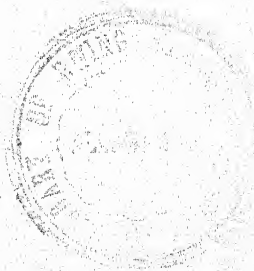
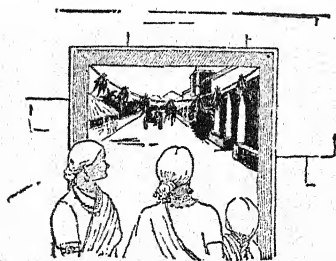
The Revolt of Sundaramma

By
MAUDE JOHNSON ELMORE

Illustrations by
GERTRUDE H. B. HOOKER

"The woman's cause is man's : they rise or sink
Together, dwarfed or Godlike, bond or free."

"Small souls enquire, 'Belongs this man
To our own race or class or clan ?'
But larger-hearted men embrace
As brothers all the human race."

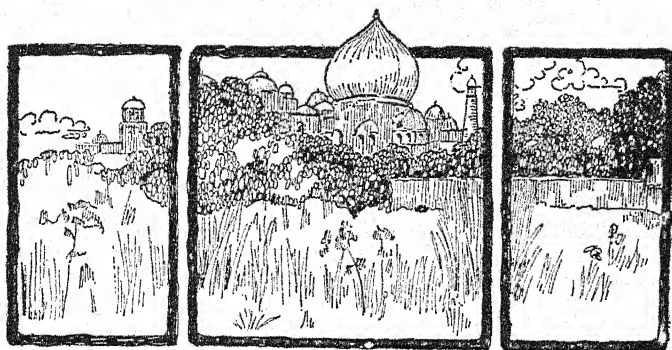


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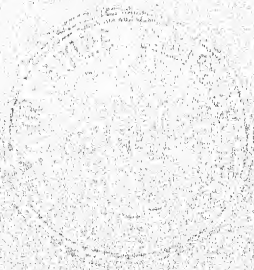
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*This book is affectionately
inscribed to my mother*

RACHEL POUCHER JOHNSON

*whose constant devotion and rigid sense of duty
caused me to enter many a Hindu home, unat-
tractive at first sight, all as similar as peas in a
pod, surprisingly clean, yet with the inmates living
a life of dull monotony, bound hand and foot by
sacred caste and strong religious customs, any
efforts to change which seemed a hopeless work
for a helpless people. But as the weeks and
months and years swiftly passed, almost uncon-
sciously to me, the loving, grateful, struggling
Hindu people became my people, and it became
my greatest joy to make known to them the
Living God, the God of my mother*

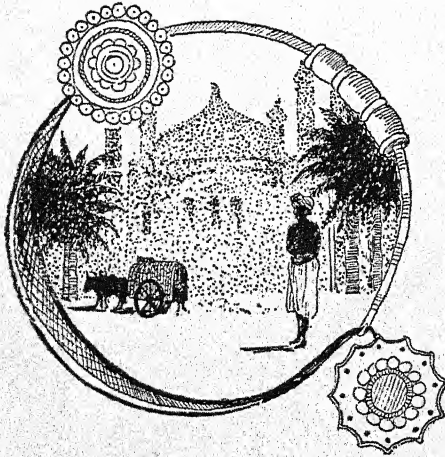


Prof. Max Muller says :—

“If I were asked what I consider the most important discovery which has been made during the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind, I should answer by the following short line :

Sanskrit, Dyaush-Pitar=Greek, Zerellathp (Zeus Pater)=Latin, Jupiter=Old Norse Tyr.

“Think what this equation means ! It means that not only our own ancestors and the ancestors of Homer and Cicero (the Greeks and Romans) spoke the same language as the people of India—this is a discovery which, however incredible it sounded at first, has long ceased to cause any surprise,—but it implies and proves that they all had once the same faith, and worshipped for a time the same supreme Deity under exactly the same name—a name which meant Heaven-Father.”





FOREWORD

WHEN the manuscript of Sundaramma was sent me for critical inspection I opened it with languid interest, expecting to find the usual missionary story of diluted value. Instead I found a real human document, full of sympathy, insight and the unconscious local colour that is possible only to one who has absorbed an environment. Here was a real Hindu girl allowed to live her own life before us. Its tragedy and comedy revealed themselves naturally, inevitably, as they do in life. At times one quite forgot that it was a story told for a purpose, and only realized it was a story—highest excellence of all.

The story interpreted the life of the women of India to the women of America by the simplest means: no argument, no oratory, just a plain photograph, not even touched up!

The style, too, charmed me in its unadorned and artless simplicity. The author was trying in the directest fashion possible to tell what she had seen and felt. She therefore could make us also see and feel.

There is a rather unusual quality of identification in Mrs. Elnore's work. She is herself,

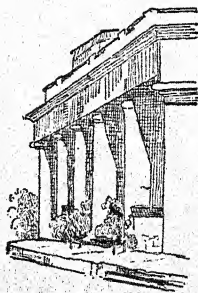
Foreword

one feels, entering into Indian life, and reporting it from within.

When the story was finished, I turned to the appendix expecting rather dry pabulum; and was again surprised by the exceeding juiciness of the information there imparted. The eye of the long-time maker of programs comes here upon just the sort of intimate, concrete information that is sought vainly in many a more pretentious volume. It is so easy for those who live in the Orient to forget how meagre is the "apperceptive mass" of the ordinary reader of missionary literature. Mrs. Elmore is both kind and discerning when she pens these illuminating comments on Hindu belief and custom.

It gives me the greatest pleasure to write this little foreword of sincere appreciation of a book that I am sure is destined to have a wide appeal and a great influence.

HELEN BARRETT MONTGOMERY.





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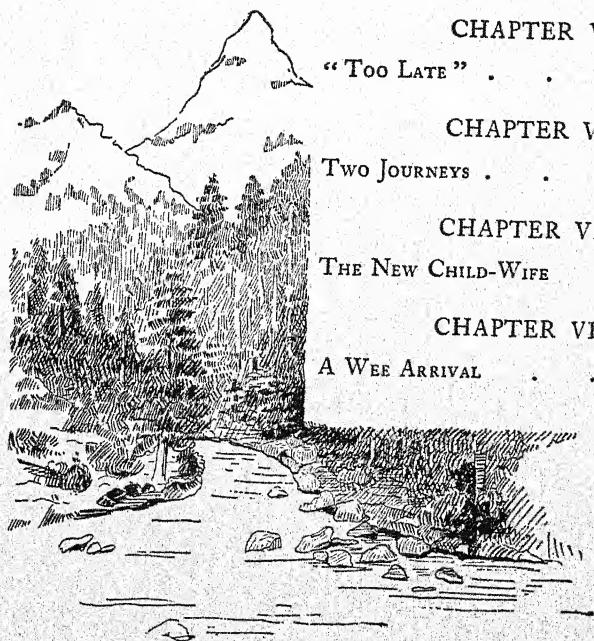
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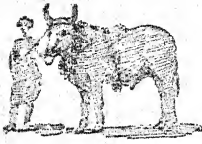
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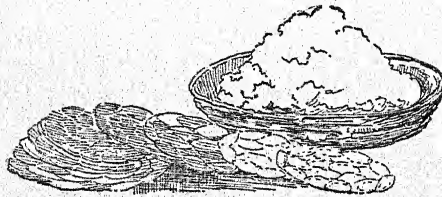
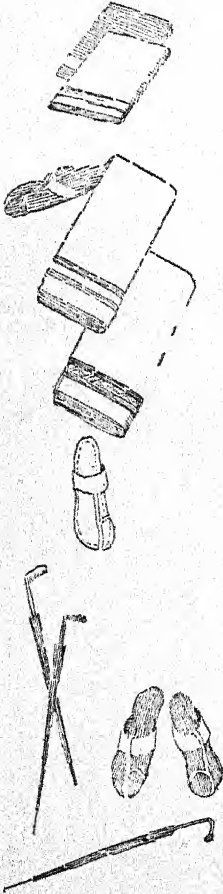
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I

THE PLOT WORKS

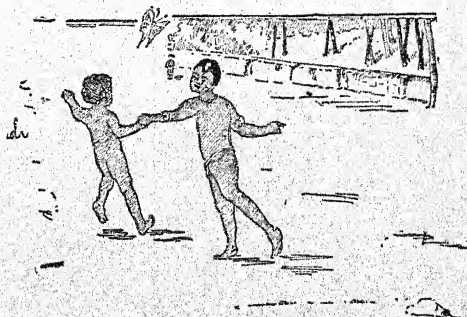
“**I** DON'T want to go to my uncle's house. He's cross and mean and I hate him, and aunt is worse than he is.”

It was a dusty, dishevelled little girl, dressed in a yellow silk koka, from whom this stormy outburst came. She and two of her playmates had ridden more than a mile with her brothers on the bags of grain which they were hauling to the Peddarakatla bazaar, thirty miles away. Now they had returned, merry and dusty, running races, and chasing butterflies along the road.

Her mother had been watching for her and had called her to come in quickly and get ready to go to her uncle's house. Sundaramma wanted to stay out-of-doors and play. She had planned to spend the rest of the morning with the other girls playing marbles on the platform beneath the temple veranda. They would have a good time, and the priest or some of the worshippers were sure to give them some sweetmeats from the offerings.

“Come on quickly. We can't wait,” repeated her mother sharply.

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"I won't go. I'll stay here alone. Why didn't you let me go with my brothers? Why must we go before they return?" she cried out defiantly.

But her mother was obdurate, and ordered Sundaramma into the house to get ready while she bargained with the cart man who had just come. Their own oxen had gone with the grain, so they must hire an ox cart from the village. The cart man argued over the price, stoutly refusing to agree to what he knew he would finally accept. Finally it was arranged that he should take Sundaramma and her mother the twenty miles before night for one rupee and twelve annas.

A half hour later a tearful little girl was bundled into the cart, together with a bag of rice, several new kokas¹ and other cloths, a large basketful of green vegetables, and a pot full of clarified butter, called ghee. Then at the last the proud, determined, scheming mother brought with her a small chest containing all the family jewels. It was wrapped in a blanket, so as to make it look like a roll of bedding.

She had worked it all out well, this plan to have Sundaramma married to her own brother, Sundaramma's uncle, a custom which is common in India. She had been promised to him years

¹ Note 1.



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ago when she was not much more than a baby, and now the uncle had sent word that the final ceremony must be performed.¹

"Ah, well, it would have to work out well," thought Sundaramma's mother as she rode along the dusty road, paying little or no heed to the sobs of the small girl by her side, so intent was she on the great event which was to take place the very next day. Had she not been making offerings to the gods these many months for a propitious outcome?

She was an orthodox Hindu woman and never doubted that the spiritual as well as the social welfare of herself and Sundaramma, and even of her sons, who so strongly opposed the wedding, depended upon this marriage. The priest had said it must be. She had secretly given one of the family jewels to him in order that he might perform the many ceremonies necessary to determine the auspicious time and to insure a successful outcome.²

The trouble was all with the two grown sons. They loved Sundaramma, and had always humoured her. She was the only girl in the family,³ and having come late in the family history, she was welcomed (which is not always the case when a girl is born in India), and had always been the pet of the entire household. The father was old and docile now. He slept

¹ Notes 2, 3, 4.

² Note 5.

³ Note 6.

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on the pial¹ beside the door, or on his rope cot in the sun the most of the time, and could not remember from one day to the next the things which were happening around him.

So everything was in the mother's control now. She was thirty years younger than her husband, and enjoyed her chance to govern him now as he had governed her for so many years. He had been kind in a Hindu man's way, and she, being deeply religious, had no complaints to make. But since Karma, that is, fate, had given her this power for a while, she intended to enjoy it. She believed that she deserved it because she had been so faithful to the gods all her life.

As they jolted along she congratulated herself because she had succeeded in getting her sons, who had declared that Sundaramma should not marry her uncle, to take this trip of three or four days to sell their grain. Before they could return the wedding would be so far along that they would be helpless.

"Ugh! They would be terribly angry," she thought, "but that would not offend the gods if the wedding really took place."

Sundaramma had fallen asleep in the other end of the cart, and a pang of pain shot through the mother's heart as she thought that she would have to return without her, for she

¹ Note 7.

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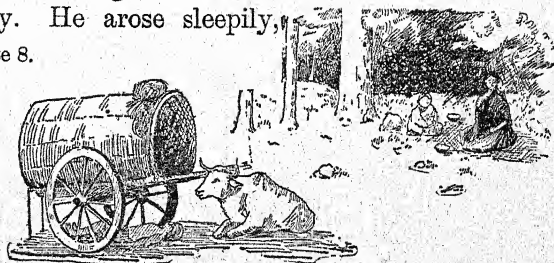
knew, as well as her sons, that her brother would not try to be kind to Sundaramma. His crops had not been good recently. His wife had borne him no children, and she, too, had become sour, and blamed every one around her for everything which went wrong.

Oh, yes, she knew all this, but there was no alternative. Her religion had steeled her heart all these years to meet just such conditions as these, and now at the critical moment, when the gods were evidently helping her, should she fail? It had taken much scheming to get her sons to go with the grain¹ at this particular time, but she had prepared everything for them, and they had gone after taking their morning food, little guessing her plot.

The sun grew hotter and hotter, and soon after noon they stopped under a beautiful banyan tree beside a well. Sundaramma and her mother were glad to rest their cramped joints, as they sat by the well and ate some coarse bread and cold rice, while the ox rested and ate his bundle of *kaffir* corn. The cart man ate and lay down under the cart, where he was soon snoring loudly. But Sundaramma's mother did not sleep. She waited nearly an hour and then went to the cart man.

"Come, wake up, it is time to go," she said, shaking him vigorously. He arose sleepily,

¹ Note 8.



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and in a few minutes they were on the road again.

The sun was dropping behind the distant palm trees when they came in sight of the great irrigation reservoir five miles from the uncle's home. They should be there within two hours now, but the ox had been going slowly and still more slowly, in spite of the mother's sharp remarks to the driver. Finally he lay down, which is an ox's way of being balky. Sundaramma and her mother clambered out of the cart and the driver made a slight effort to get the ox to rise, but with no success. Then he, too, had a scheme.

"I must go to the village and get help. Watch the cart until I come back," he said abruptly, and disappeared, going in the direction of a group of thatched roofs which they could see through a clearing in the cactus.

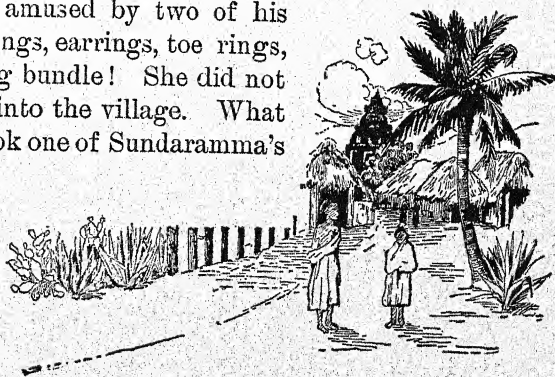
Sundaramma was frightened and began to cry when the driver left. Her mother wrapped a blanket tightly around the little girl, for the sun had already set, and it was fast getting dark and cold there on the exposed bank of the tank.

To tell the truth, her mother was trying to keep up her own courage. No, the gods would not desert her now, she was thinking. Had she not parted with one of the valuable family jewels for protection against just such an

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accident as this? Had she ever failed in doing the priest's bidding? Did not the *sanyasis*, the holy men, always come to her house when they visited her village? When they came in tired with their pilgrimages did they not lie down on her cot and rest while she washed their feet in warm water, and then milk, and then warm water again? Did she not prepare the most appetizing curries for them? Surely nothing untoward could happen after she had stored up so much merit by these good deeds.

Nevertheless she was nervous and anxious, and Sundaramma kept teasing her to run with her to the near village. She could not explain to Sundaramma that the wedding jewels were in the cart, and could not be left. Still the cart man did not return. Finally she climbed into the cart and in the darkness unlocked the chest. She took out a string of gold beads, another of gold beads interspersed with real coral from the Indian ocean, and having attached the silver charms that had been sealed by the priests and given to the family many years before. Then strings of pearls for the hair, one large gold pin engraved with an image of one of the gods being amused by two of his wives, then more nose rings, earrings, toe rings, and anklets—such a big bundle! She did not dare to carry them all into the village. What should she do? She took one of Sundaramma's



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little jackets and tied up all the rings for the fingers and toes and nose and ears. She made another bundle of the bracelets and hair ornaments, and taking a string from the peppers in the vegetable basket, she tied the necklaces together.

"Oh, mamma, here come three men from the village," suddenly called out Sundaramma, who had been posted to watch for help. "Now we can soon go on. Let's stay in this village all night."

The mother was frightened. Three men do not usually come to help lift up a tired or balky ox. If they did, she would have to pay them well, or more likely they would help themselves. She quickly ran down the bank and hid her three packages in three different places. She had only time to wrap her blanket tightly about her and stand quietly by Sundaramma when the men had come near enough to see them plainly.

Yes, one was the driver, and so she felt relieved. He had not hurried himself. He had stopped to eat his evening food. It gave his ox more rest, and made his chances for a present greater. Also the people of the village would be very anxious to have a well-to-do, defenseless woman, wearing plenty of jewels, and carrying suspicious-looking packages, spend the night in their village. He would be

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sure to have free entertainment, and perhaps better.

The ox was contentedly resting, and did not rise when the men pretended to help it.

"What is the use, anyway?" said the driver. "Did any one ever go against *Karma*?¹ It was to be, and so has come about that we are to stay in this village to-night. I will take you to your brother's house very early in the morning."

Having given this decision he put the yoke on the neck of the ox which, strangely enough, found no trouble in rising when it heard the familiar command. The men steadied the cart for Sundaramma and her mother to get in, but the poor woman was in great distress. If they stopped in the village she knew that many, many of her things, if not all, would be stolen before morning, and if she bribed the men to take her on, there was scarcely any more hope of safety. But the wedding was the important matter. There was no time to delay. So she cried and begged them to take her to her brother's that night.

The driver still persisted. His ox was too tired, and besides that, he was afraid of thieves, as there was a rendezvous of them on the hills two miles farther on, and only the previous week a cart had been robbed, and the

¹ Note 9.

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jewels actually torn from a woman's arms, ears and nose.

The poor mother knew that there was some truth in this, but she feared the village more, and as it was still early, although dark, she determined to get to the end of the journey. The urgency of the wedding would allow of no delay.

"Here, I will give you this if you take us on safely," she said, showing one of the silver ornaments on her arm to the driver.

It was a great gift, and he looked at it with covetous eyes, and hesitated, but the other men argued that it would only be stolen from him and much more besides.

Sundaramma's mother began to cry again. She could not plead the urgency of the wedding, because that would start Sundaramma into inquiries which might thwart the whole matter. No, she must think up some other way.

Did they not know that she was carrying a poor present to the great idol, Bodamma, in her brother's village, with a few cloths and vegetables for the priests?

"I vowed a year ago that nothing should hinder my paying that vow to-night. To-night, even now, without doubt, two priests are in my brother's house awaiting my arrival. What may happen if I do not arrive, and the curse of



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an unpaid vow comes on me,¹ who can tell?' and again she began to sob in genuine distress, for if this did not move them, the jewels were lost, and with that the wedding, too, for the ceremonies could not go on without the jewels.

She had devised a tale even better than she knew, for Bodamma was also the goddess of their village, and if her dealings were with the priest of this idol, the men had no intention of interfering with her journey. They knew that priest too well, and the vengeance he would wreak, not only on them, but on their entire village. Their whole attitude changed at once. Yet they were not going to let the opportunity escape entirely unimproved.

"Oh, woman, our hearts bleed for you, but what can we do? We are poor. What shall we do if we are robbed even of our poor clothes, and perhaps beaten while protecting you? And yet if your honour would care to give us some little present, we might run the risk, and try to save you from the curse of your vow. What will you give us?"

"I have no money," she replied, "except what I must use to pay my vow."

"Well, let us see your jewels then. Open your box," they commanded, growing bolder again.

"No, here is a head-cloth apiece, but the

¹ Note 10.

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jewels, too, must go to the priest," she replied.

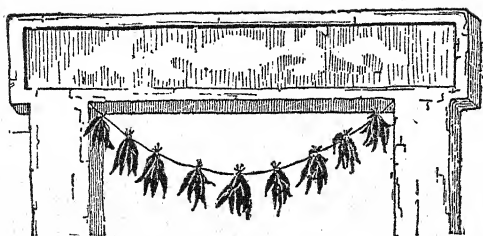
They took the head-cloths, but continued arguing, and would not start along the road until she unlocked the box.

The men were angry when they saw how little it contained but, believing her story, contented themselves by taking a pair of garnet earrings, one of which had lost its little gold pendant, and a nose ring with a ruby pendant. These, with a few other jewels of no great value, she had purposely left in the box when she hid the others.

"Wait a minute until Sundaramma and I get a drink," said the mother as the men now prepared to move on.

They ran down the bank to the water's edge. Sundaramma drank, but her mother eagerly gathered up her bundles of jewels, secreting them easily in her loose clothing. They climbed into the cart again, and the rested ox started off briskly while the men walked on before, one carrying a lantern containing a flickering candle. Two hours later a very tired woman and sleepy little girl stopped in front of the uncle's house, while the dogs of all that part of the village roused the sleeping family.





II

A MOTHER'S SOLILOQUY

SUNDARAMMA slept soundly and rose late the next morning. Her uncle had brought a little white lamb for her to play with. She tied some bells around its neck and fed it some milk, and then took it out to show the other children, after she had hurriedly drunk her customary rice-water.

All the people in the house were busy, and every one was excited. The priests were there, but Sundaramma thought it was only the preparation for some ordinary feast, or ceremony. She was glad to get away from it all and hunt up her friends.

They found a monkey in the bazaar, and fed it scraps of food. Then they played in another little girl's courtyard until her mother called her to come and eat her food. Yes, she was hungry, and went gladly with her mother.

"Why, mother, our house looks like a wedding! Why are so many people here?" said little Sundaramma as she noticed for the first

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time the string of mango leaves strung over the entrance of her uncle's front door.

"Was the swami glad when you gave him all the cloths and vegetables? What did he say?"

"Yes, yes, Sundaree," the mother said, as she hurried her into the dining-room. The men had eaten their food and were having their noon siesta.

Little Sundaramma skipped across the courtyard, only to run in front of her aunt who was coming out of one of the storerooms, with a fan in her hand upon which was heaped pesseloo and tamarind for the curry which she was preparing.

"You daughter of a buffalo!" her aunt exclaimed angrily. "I'll soon teach you better manners."

Sundaramma was so happy, she was just about to say, "I did not see you," when she saw her aunt's angry face; then she called out angrily, too, "No, you won't teach me better manners because I'm never coming over here again. You haven't any manners yourself, so you can't possibly teach me better ones."

Sundaramma hastened into the dining-room. Two women were there, who had just finished their noon meal and were now talking excitedly about the work which must still be done that afternoon.



A Mother's Soliloquy

"Sundaree, are you ready for your food? You might have washed your hands and washed out your mouth, instead of quarrelling with your aunt," said the mother, who had just come in from the kitchen, bringing the savoury curry and rice.

Sundaramma hurriedly grabbed up her little brass chembu;¹ filling it with water from a larger chembu, she went out into the courtyard again, rinsed out her mouth three or four times and then, pouring the remaining water on her hands, washed them ceremonially clean, at least, and returned to her mother's side. The mother was busy placing flowers and sweets upon the sacred darbha grass² as an offering, before the idol, Vigneshwara,³ the god of weddings. They soon seated themselves before the leaf-plates, upon which food had already been placed and began to eat the rich, delicious rice.

"Oh, mamma, my lamb is the sweetest little thing. I wonder why uncle gave it to me. Did you buy it?" asked innocent Sundaramma. She scarcely gave her mother time to reply, but began at once to tell about the antics of the monkey in the bazaar.

After finishing their food, they folded up the leaf-plates, carrying them out with their right hands to the chickens. Then they took turns



¹ Note 11.

² Note 12.

³ Note 13.

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in holding the brass chembu and pouring the water, while they washed their hands and faces and rinsed out their mouths.

"No, Sundaree," said her mother, as Sundaramma started to go out into the street to play again, "you must not go out again to play—that is, you must be bathed and cleaned up first. Have you forgotten that three priests are here for the great feast to-night?"

"No, I have not forgotten, but I'll come back in plenty of time," answered Sundaramma.

"Come now, Sundaree. I must dress you while I have time," said the determined mother. After bathing her well, the mother rubbed her with cocoanut oil. Then she put *katika*¹—an oily black ointment—under her eyes. It seems to enlarge the black eyes and make them even more alluring and brilliant. She next rubbed the neck, arms, and legs with saffron. Sundaramma submitted, and soon became quite excited, because all of this extra care in her toilet meant a greater feast and gathering in her uncle's house than she had anticipated.

"Mamma, why are not my brothers here?" asked Sundaramma.

"Do men usually cook for and attend to the priests? Besides, who would sell the grain for us, if your brothers were to come to-day? Now, if you don't ask me another question," said the

¹ Note 14.

A Mother's Soliloquy

nervous mother, "I will let you go out-of-doors and show your little friends this beautiful new cloth, when I get it tied on you."

Sundaramma could hardly be good enough, she was so anxious to have on the beautiful light blue silk koka with its broad border of gold lace. She sat up straight as could be, and never cried out once or jerked away, as her mother combed her snarly hair. The braid was lengthened nearly ten inches by the usual custom of braiding in with the hair long, thread-like strands of black fibre, which appear similar to the hair at a little distance. Jasmine flowers were plaited and fastened on the top of the braid.

"You may go out now," said the mother as she tied on the lovely new cloth, "but you must return by the time the rays of the sun reach the well-curb."

Sundaramma had often been similarly decorated before, for the feasts and festivals of the idols in her own village. So without the slightest suspicion of the real reason of this feast she hurried happily away.

The mother's work was now done. The wedding was well on its way. Save the extra jewels, Sundaramma was already dressed for her part as the bride, although, poor child, she did not know it.

"It was Karma," said the women as they



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talked about it. "She will suffer for a while, as is the lot of all women, and then she will settle down to the inevitable."

"No, the mother need not stay and see her suffer," said another. "What good could it do?"

Yes, the poor heart-sick and fanatical mother had thought this all out, too, and had given directions, over and over again, to her sisters, who had charge of the feast.

It would be best for her to leave her brother's house, before Sundaramma heard of the wedding. This wedding ought to have been celebrated in her own home but she could not get ready for it in her own village and keep it secret from her sons, and so the priests had devised this plan. It was working well. The gods must be with her.

"Salaam. Don't cry. We will be as a mother to Sundaree," said one of the women as she helped the mother into the ox cart to return home.

"Are we not all here?" said another. "Are we not mothers of daughters?"

Another woman, cracking her knuckles in nervous sympathy, called out as the cart moved away, "Was not this marriage planned by the god and written on Sundaramma's forehead when she was born? Could any one alter the writing of Karma? Rejoice that the gods are with us."



A Mother's Soliloquy

Sundaramma's mother tried to brace up then, for, of course, the wedding was none of her planning. "Did not the sacred books say first that the uncle must marry his niece?"¹ Unkiah and Nursiah did not care for religion and they insist that he is too old. They say Sundaree must marry her first cousin, who is only twenty-six years. But what do they know? The priests have performed many ceremonies and have repeatedly assured me that this marriage was arranged by the gods. They have asked many presents for all of this, but now it is over, and has come about just as they said it would. The gods are surely with the priests and with me."

A fanatical look came into her eyes as she added, "Whose plans are working to-day? Unkiah's and Nursiah's, or mine? Are the gods with me or with them?"

She had not yet turned off the street, when she saw Sundaramma rush out of her friend's house crying as if her little heart would break.

"I have escaped just in time," said the mother as with tears streaming down her face she watched Sundaramma run screaming down the street, and disappear within the gate that led to her brother's home.

"The gods are surely with me. Some one has told Sundaramma that she is dressed for

¹ Note 15.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

the wedding. I might have known it." She cried so hard that the driver of the ox sympathizingly told her of how the grandmother of his children had cried, when the mother of his children was married.

"It's women's way," said he; "the longer you wait the worse it is. Why, you have a dog or a buffalo or especially a cow,¹ and see how attached you get to it after a few years! Seems as if you could not enjoy life ever again without it. After a few weeks, or months, possibly, you find you are just about as happy as you ever were. Better part with her now before she is ten years old than wait until she is even older. You would feel just that much worse and have the anger of the gods besides."

Yes, she knew the gods would be gratified, and her caste and social position would be kept pure and above priestly reproach. As she rocked to and fro, seated cross-legged on the bottom of the cart, she muttered the names of the gods over and over again and repeated sacred verses and mantrams to herself in an undertone.

What would her sons do, when they found it out? They might hear of it on the way and be returning even now. It made her shudder to think of it. If they did not hear of it until they reached Podili, they could not return

¹ Note 16.

A Mother's Soliloquy

before the next afternoon. She had had very little trouble in keeping her son's wife from telling about the wedding. She not only had seen the extra preparations going on, but she had divined as much because of the more frequent visits of the priest and the greater presents given him secretly. Unkiah's wife was jealous of Sundaramma. She was always given the choicest of the food and her mistakes were always blamed upon the son's wife—"Oh, no, she would not tell her husband. She would be only too glad when Sundaramma was gone and her own children should be first in the home."

"The mother of Unkiah's children will be glad to see me," thought the distressed mother; "she will not scold me. After all, what can the sons do now? They will have to get over it."

She went on her way full of questionings and fears, and yet reasoning within herself that the gods must be with her. Could any one fight against the gods and have the success that she was having?



III

THE PRIESTS HELP

"**M**AMMA, mamma!" Sundaramma cried as she ran into the courtyard, then on into the kitchen and store-rooms hunting for her mother. Her uncle's first wife looked up from her work and eyed her gloatingly. She was busy watching the fires and stirring the different curries from time to time. Sundaramma would not ask her a question. She sobbed out afresh in uncontrollable grief at the awful thought of living with her always as her uncle's wife.

Her screams soon brought several women and children from the different rooms and even in from the street. They all tried to be kind to her and to reason with her. As soon as she understood that her mother had really gone home, that that very afternoon she was to be married, and that all these preparations were for her wedding with her mother's cross brother, her anger knew no bounds. Crying and screaming, she jerked the flowers out of her hair, unbraided it and threw the decorations on the floor. The women remonstrated and even tried to hinder her, but they were helpless before little Sundar-



The Priests Help

amma's fierce wrath. She untied her silk koka and put on her old one instead. Then she tried to run away, but the doors were shut and people stood on guard everywhere.

The women did not know what to do with her. They tried to quiet her by caresses, but Sundaramma only cried the harder.

"Are you any better than we are?" said one.

"Who are you that you may escape marriage and live at home on your mother's lap?" asked another.

"Is your father not already the same as dead? Will your mother live always?" pointedly asked the third sympathetic friend.

"Every little girl of good family at your age is married," philosophically remarked another woman.

"I was married before I was ten years old," said another, "and I know how you feel to leave your mother, but if you are good and brave and let us fix you up again for the ceremony, your uncle will——" But the mere mention of her uncle caused the child to scream violently. "I want my mamma. I want my own mamma. I won't marry him, anyway. Oh, do take me to my mamma. I want my brothers. When they come, they will punish you. They said they would always take care of me and that I need never, never marry my old uncle," sobbed helpless, suffering Sundaramma, as she

The Revolt of Sundaramma

stormed out her pitifully hopeless appeal. There was no way to help her. They never dreamed that this child marriage was an outrage. Why, they themselves had been similarly married. It was hard and cruel. Girls suffered terribly, but most of them lived through it. Anyway, was it not the common lot of all the women of the world? Did any one escape? No respectable girl could remain safe if unmarried, even in her father's orthodox home.

Nothing could be done with Sundaramma so at last the women were forced to send for the uncle. As soon as Sundaramma saw him enter the room, she fell down on the floor and cried and kicked violently.

"Leave her alone. Let me attend to her," said her uncle as he approached the child, who, in his ignorance, he was so cruelly wronging.

"After I gave you that nice little lamb, is this the way you treat me?" asked the uncle kindly.

"I don't ever want to see the little lamb again," sobbed out Sundaramma indignantly. "I just hate it. I want to go home to my own mamma. Oh, please let me go home."

"Sundaree, that is impossible. Your mother and the priests have arranged all this. They are only fulfilling the plan of the god. Now I must return to the wedding guests. You get up and let the women get you ready," said the

The Priests Help

uncle. But Sundaramma only began to scream the harder.

"Let her alone," ordered the irritated uncle; "her anger will soon spend itself. Anyway, her strength cannot last much longer."

He returned to visit with the guests, and the women left her alone; even the aunt, whose rightful place was so soon to be given to this new child-bride, looked sympathetically at Sundaramma.

The wedding festivities had begun. The procession, accompanied by music, was marching around the pandal.¹ Then they would worship the sacred fig-tree, as Vishnu, and then the Brahman priest would perform several long ceremonies, which must be repeated by the groom. Then the bride would have to appear. The women began to be nervous. Sundaramma would not get up. She had stopped crying. She had cried until she was all tired out, but her anger was as great as ever. Threatenings and bribings were of no avail. They hesitated long but at last they had to send for the groom.

"Sundaree, get up at once," said the angry uncle. She rolled over on her face. He lifted her to her feet but she would not try to stand. She dropped down in a miserable huddle on the floor.



¹ Note 17.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

"Sundaree, unless you get up at once, I shall whip you severely," said the thoroughly angry uncle.

"Kill me if you will," Sundaramma replied, "but I will not be married."

The groom did not know what to do. Perhaps the priests often had such cases. Anyway, he would ask their advice. He sent for them.

"Oh, this is absurd," said one of the smiling, treacherous-looking priests; "a little girl like that interrupting a solemn wedding."

"The chief gate to hell was a woman sure enough," remarked another priest.¹

"Our sacred books, every one of them, inform us over and over repeatedly, that the most vile object in this world is a woman. In her transition stage, the natural depravity in her is gaining ascendancy. We must control her now or she will become more of a demon than a woman, if she be not altogether destroyed," said one of the most subtle-looking of the priests.

"By all means we must conquer her," said an evil-looking priest near poor Sundaree, "or no man will be able to break her to any usefulness whatever."²

Sundaramma screamed defiantly, even while they were talking, so he approached even nearer and said to the other priests, "We

¹ Note 18.

² Note 19.



The Priests Help

will take her and drive out the evil spirit in her."

"I want my mamma! Let me go!" screamed the poor, frightened Sundaramma in helplessness and hopelessness, as they carried her out of the room.



IV

THE PLOT DISCOVERED

SUNDARAMMA'S brothers were hot and tired from the long journey to Podili. Their oxen, tied to the wheels of the cart, were now resting in its shade. Just around the corner of the rest-house, sheltered from the wind, Unkiah and Nursiah were cooking their food. The rest-house was quite full of travellers, farmers, merchants, stock-breeders, and mendicants.

A stranger came near to borrow fire. "How much are you getting for your jonulu?" asked Unkiah.

"Eight measures to the rupee," replied the stranger. "I want to return home if I can to-night. If you know of any one going back over the Peddarkutla road to-night, kindly let me know. My caste-relative, Valpula Subbiah, makes a wedding this week and I am in a hurry to get back."

"Valpula Subbiah married!" Unkiah exclaimed.

"He is our mother's brother. Whom does he marry? When does the wedding begin? To-morrow?" asked Nursiah in great



The Plot Discovered

anxiety. He did not need an answer to the first question ; he knew it. But if the wedding did not begin until to-morrow, they could get there and stop it. The stranger did not know for sure.

"We are all going over to the feast to-morrow afternoon, but I don't know whether it is the first or second day of the wedding," said the stranger.¹

The brothers felt sick. They were nearly forty miles from their little sister, by the shortest possible route. The only means of travel was with oxen, that walked at the rate of two and one-half miles per hour.

They looked at each other in despair.

"Nursiah, you remain by the food, and I will go to the bazaar and sell out our grain. We, too, must return to-night," said Unkiah.

Unkiah did not try to get the best price for his grain. The merchants soon discovered that he was overanxious to sell and they would not give him the price that they had been giving to farmers all day long.

Unkiah, hungry and very angry, had sold out recklessly within an hour, and then ate his delayed meal.

"Five carts are going to join together, for the night's journey," said Nursiah. They had much to delay them, and at the very last minute

¹ Note 20.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

they had to wait for two of the oxen to be shod. It was nearly ten o'clock when they started on their long ride through one of the dreamy, moonlit nights, ideally seen only in the orient.

"Unkiah, we can't possibly get there before noon to-morrow," said discouraged Nursiah.

"Even with an empty bandy, with these tired oxen, we shall not get there before three to-morrow afternoon," said disconsolate Unkiah as he jerked the tail of the oxen (held between his toes) in order to hurry them along as fast as possible. They were in the first cart, purposely, and so could set the pace for the others. For fear of possible thieves, the others would not lag far behind.

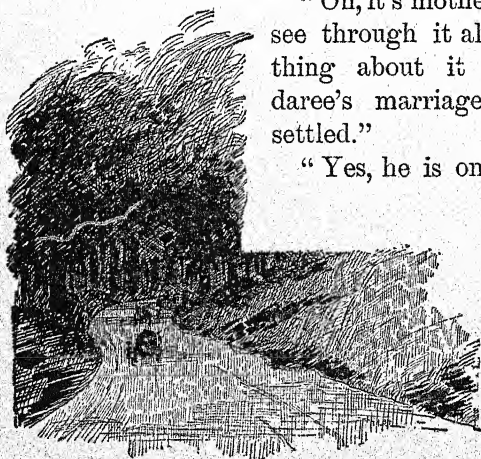
"Now I understand, Unkiah, why everything was in such readiness for this trip," said Nursiah.

"Yes, every gunny sack was mended," said Unkiah, "and mother insisted that I have the oxen shod last week."

"On Monday she sent me over to Razupalem in order to get a new strap for the yoke," said Nursiah resentfully.

"Oh, it's mother's scheme," said Unkiah. "I see through it all now. She has not said anything about it recently, and I hoped Sundaree's marriage with her first cousin was settled."

"Yes, he is only twenty-six years old, while



The Plot Discovered

Uncle Subbiah must be nearly twice that age," said Nursiah. "He will surely die first and then our little Sundaree will be a widow."

"Our lawgiver, Manu, speaks true enough when he says, 'By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house,'"¹ said the discouraged Unkiah. "Think of our good, faithful, religious mother deceiving us like this. She can't help it. She is just a woman, born full of deceit."² Nursiah, what can we do about it?"

They talked late in the night, but could not decide upon any plan to save Sundaramma. They knew that their mother would not be sure of more than two days, when she sent them to Podili. She would know that they would hear of the wedding there, if not on the road. But if she had risked it and to-morrow was the first day of the wedding, then they could stop it. In any case they decided that they would take Sundaramma right straight home and keep her as long as possible. They planned many impracticable schemes and uttered curses against their mother and uncle, and even the conniving priests, at this safe distance from them.

¹ Note 21.

² Note 22.

V

"TOO LATE"

POOR little Sundaramma slept late. It was such a heavy sleep.

"I have such a dizzy headache," she said when she woke up, after nine o'clock in the morning. She cried softly, for the strength and passion of yesterday were gone. The women cried in sympathy as they talked about it to each other.

"Yes, the devil that was in her yesterday has left her now," said one.

"They gave her too much black medicine,"¹ said another. "I was afraid she would be like Kotamma, and never wake up."

"If that happened they would throw her into the well," said a fortunate mother of three sons, "and it would serve her right, too. With such a demon in her, she will never become the mother of a single son."

"But why don't they tell, then, that drowning in the village well is necessary to drive the devil out?" asked a thoughtful woman. "Why do they always throw her in so secretly, at midnight of the darkest night, and then affect

¹ Note 23.

27902

“Too Late”

so much surprise in the morning and all declare that she has fallen into the well accidentally?”

“Well, it was her fate,” said another; “she must have committed some terrible sin in her former birth.¹ I wonder why women have to suffer so for their sins, while men escape so completely.”

“Does any one, save the god, know why he created woman as the chief gate to hell? We must obey the priests implicitly and give them presents regularly so that we may possibly be reborn men² in our next birth. It is our only door of hope,” said a strong-minded, orthodox woman. “Who are we, that we dare ask them³ why?”

“No, if even the priests come from their secret sacrifices⁴ before the idols, foaming at the mouth and sometimes having fits right before our eyes, what would become of us nothings?” asked a large-eyed, sweet-faced, earnest little woman.

The women stopped their talking suddenly as they heard little Sundaramma moan in her sleep.

“It is good that her mother went home,” said one.

“Yes, but her spirit had to be broken,” added another; “she knew not reason.”

“Well, she won’t disobey again,” said a tall,

¹ Note 24.

² Note 25.

³ Note 26.

⁴ Note 27.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

angular woman. "She won't want the priests to take her to the temple again."

The new child-wife was sleeping quietly now, so the women left the room. They came in occasionally to see if she had awakened.

"Sundaree, Sundaree, mother's pet, light of our lives, what is the matter?" wailed one of the women, when she found her, about an hour later, staring blankly at the beams overhead. Several women rushed in and began to rub her. They petted her and brought her sweetmeats from the feast, and rice-water.¹ She sobbed when they tried to make her answer them. They gave her an oil-bath and a massage. Finally they persuaded her to drink the rice-water, for she was thirsty. They put flowers in her hair and tried to tie on her silk koka, but Sundaramma would not or could not sit up.

"Sundaree, Sundaree!" called some one from the courtyard. The women rushed to the door just as the groom came out on the parapet overlooking the women's compartments.

"So you have come!" said the groom, with a satisfied smile, as he saw Unkiah and Nursiah, hot and weary and excited. "You follow the women. She is in there."

"Too late," they said, as they saw little Sundaree. The tali (wedding symbol) was tied

¹ Note 28.

"Too Late"

around her neck. Unkiah picked up the sobbing, new little child-bride in his arms.

The brothers looked in sympathetic, speechless agony, as they saw the burned spot on the top of her head, and the red mark on the little, swollen eyelids that the red-hot needle had made.¹ How she had withstood them! The women crowded around and told all they knew about it.

"They took her to his room first. Oh, she screamed terribly," said a suffering, sympathetic woman; "then they thought that the idol would frighten the demon out of her and they took her over to the temple."

"When she came back," said another little woman, "she was smiling. She did not make any objections. She wouldn't say a word, though. She seemed stupid."

"Perhaps they gave her that charmed medicine that they gave widows to make them smile,² as they ascended their husband's funeral pyre," said an intelligent-looking woman.

"The priests know even the secrets of the gods," said one more devout than the rest. "We are blessed to have such wise priests with us. They must be friends of the gods, like the holy men of old."

It was all a tangle, but women could not understand religion, anyway. The gods had



¹ Note 29.

² Note 30.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

said that a woman's husband was to her as God. She had nothing to do but obey him and worship him, no matter to what excesses of immorality and drunkenness he was degraded.

Sundaramma, sitting between her brothers, was coaxed to eat some of the good, rich, delicious curry which the women brought in to the tired men. They told her they would start for home as soon as the oxen had been fed and rested a while.

When they were ready to go, the groom came with a servant bearing a large silver tray heaped up with red bananas, guavas, cocoanuts and many different kinds of fried sweet cakes. He also gave to each a gold-embroidered puncha and head-cloth.

The uncle had won. The brothers were too angry to talk to him. They took the presents and put them in the bandy¹ with Sundaramma.

The groom was perfectly willing that his new wife should go home to her mother. He had married her—that was enough for now. He knew that no man lived who could separate a Hindu wife from her husband against his will.² The tali was tied on and so now it would be even better if she were away from there. He still had another day of wedding ceremonies and festivities. Many guests and priests must be entertained and given worthy gifts. This

¹ Note 31.

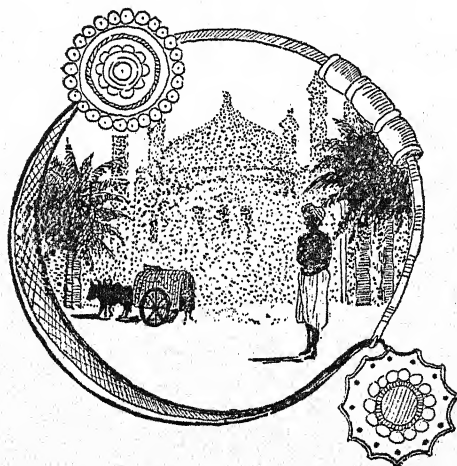
² Note 32.

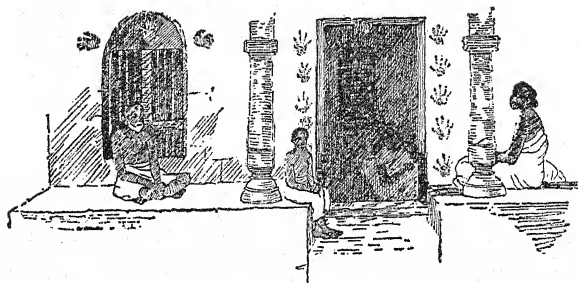


"Too Late"

needed all his time and thought, so he was even glad to have her out of the house. Then, too, the women would do their cooking much better, if they didn't have the new bride to waste their time over.

He went down to the gate as they moved off. It looked well, and he cared for his social position.





VI

TWO JOURNEYS

“THE father of my son has returned,”¹ said Unkamma as she heard Unkiah’s voice without the gate.

“Amma, amma, they have returned from the Podili bazaar,” called Unkamma as she tried to arouse her usually alert mother-in-law, who was feigning sleep. She rushed down to the gate to let them in.

“Why, where did you get Sundaramma?” she exclaimed in surprise. They talked back and forth to each other at the top of their voices, while they unloaded the bandy and put the ox in his corner for the night. The mother heard all of the talking but did not dare to come out.

“Mother, come! Mother, come now and see little Sundaree,” called Nursiah in angry tones. “See how cruelly they have burned her! Sundaree, tell her all you told us. Ugh! if the gods torture children so, then the gods be demons.”²

¹ Note 33.

² Note 34.

Two Journeys

"True enough," said thoughtful Nursiah. "Why, mother, Sundaree didn't even know us when we first spoke to her."

The poor, crying mother cuddled Sundaramma up close to her, kissing her again and again, yet, in her blindness, she would do it all over again, if necessary.

The brothers refused to let their mother touch their food. They would not let her do any trading, neither would they give her any permission to take presents to the priests in the temple. The priests lost their interest in her then and the disconsolate mother almost lost her faith.

"Mamma, do let me go out-of-doors, just for a little while," said poor Sundaramma. "I am so tired of the house. What hurt can it do? I'm not married. I'm just Sundaree. I won't live with my uncle again. Please let me go out just once."

Over and over the same request was made but the mother was helpless to grant it. Child-wives of wealthy, good-caste families are never permitted to play out-of-doors. Even her indulgent brothers did not dare to permit it. One may not defy a caste rule, where the Hindu priests reign.¹

Sundaramma fretted and cried much, but finally settled down to the common lot of the higher caste women of India.²

¹ Note 35.

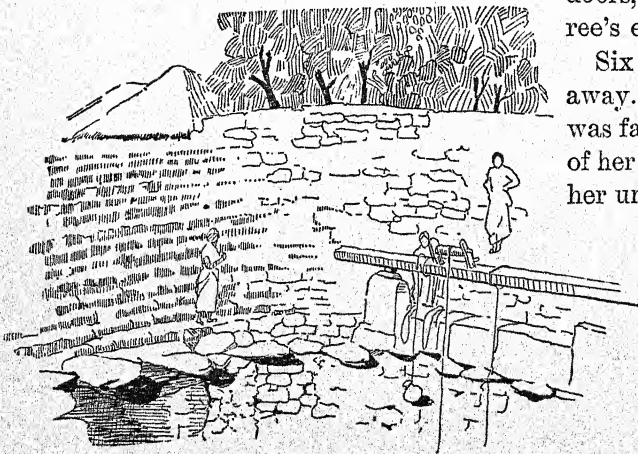
² Note 36.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

Every morning and evening she was permitted to go to their caste well. Then she could exchange remarks with other women, but they usually had to hurry home. She had no opportunity to play there. The priests often stood near so that the women could not loiter. It was such a narrow, cramped life compared with her free life before she was married. Then she could go anywhere, even into the out-caste part of the village, occasionally, and see what was going on, without incurring any risk of priestly displeasure; now, she could only go into the one little part of the village, where her own caste lived. Just this one little walk morning and evening outside of her home, yet she soon looked forward to this.

Sundaree teased Unkiah's children to stay and play with her and sometimes they brought other children into the house to play with her, Sundaree's friends, who had not yet been married, and then Sundaramma had happy, happy days. But some days, in the midst of their plays, they would decide to play out-of-doors, in spite of Sundaree's entreaties.

Six weeks passed away. Sundaramma was fairly happy in spite of her restrictions. Then her uncle came.



Two Journeys

"Mamma, mamma, don't let me go with him," wildly sobbed Sundaramma as she clasped her mother about the waist. "Mamma, hide me. Send him away."

"No, no, my sweet moonbeam, you need not go," said the anxious mother.

Valpula Subbiah came into the courtyard, bringing a new red silk koka bordered with beautiful gold lace, and a lovely gold bangle set with seven pearls. The girl's eyes danced with pleasure. She even let him put on the bangle.

"But I'm not going home with you," she cried suddenly, fearing the presents meant that. "I'm not your wife and you are not my husband. You are just my uncle."

"Take your new cloth and bracelet and go to bed," said the irritated husband; "do not trouble about matters that are none of yours."

Sundaramma was happy at once, for had not her uncle himself sent her off to bed; then he was surely not going to take her with him this time. The driver of his oxen had told her that they were going back that night, therefore they could not be planning to take her, as he had told her to go to bed. Sundaramma's mother rejoiced with her, for they would probably be together another month.

"Oh, mamma, won't it be fun to-morrow, to show off my beautiful bracelet and new koka?" joyfully asked the relieved child.



The Revolt of Sundaramma

After all, it was not so hard to be married. Nearly every little girl she knew and used to play with was already married, or would be very soon. Yes, her mother had been right; even now she would be ashamed not to be married. Confiding thus to her mother, she soon fell asleep happily and contentedly.

Out on the veranda, her husband and brothers talked of the crops. The anger of the brothers had lessened. It was only Sundaree's fate. They were kind to Subbiah, because he had let Sundaree stay with them so long. Even now he seemed to be going back without her. The mother was squatting just within the doorway, listening to all of the conversation, blessing the gods meanwhile because Sundaree could stay at home a little longer.

Finally the moon came up above the horizon; the night was like a fairy day in dreamland.

"Sister, do not wake Sundaree. Get her things ready. I'll put her in the cart as she is," said her husband suddenly, as the beautiful moonlight revealed the landscape.

The hot tears of intense disappointment rolled down the mother's cheeks as she went to her sad work. She knew it was useless to say a word of objection to her brother, since he had evidently come with this plan in mind.

"Sundaree did not plan to go to-night," said Unkiah. "Let her make up her mind to it, or,

Two Journeys

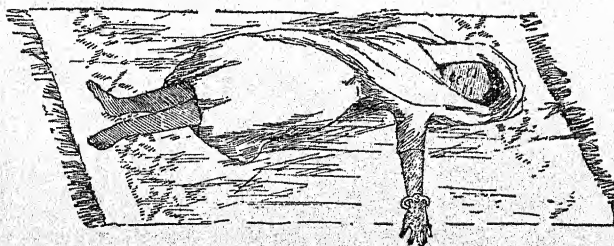
at least, say good-bye to her little friends as well as her mother."

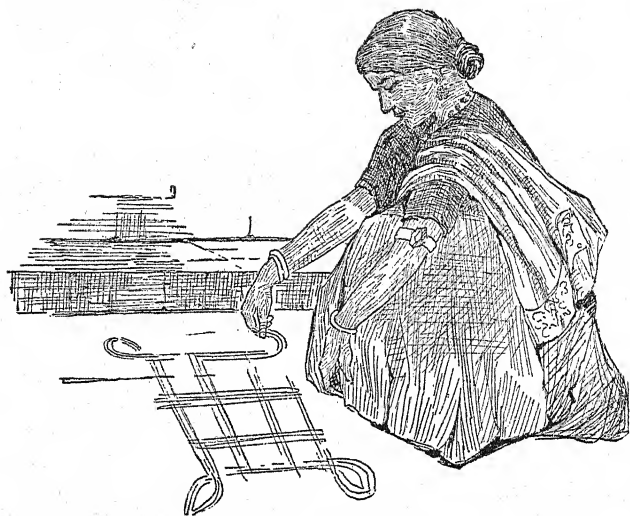
"Yes, let her stay until harvest time and we will repay you generously," said Nursiah, who loved Sundaramma so much that he tried to make a bargain with her husband.

Subbiah listened to them coolly but did not hesitate.

"What good is a wife in her mother's home?" he asked. "All the villagers have twitted me these many days, because I'm married to a bride who lived with her mother. Now they know that I have come for her. I do not return without her."

When all was ready, they went into the women's apartments and saw Sundaramma sleeping soundly on the mat. A happy smile was on the childish little face. One small dimpled arm was stretched out on the mat, displaying the new bracelet. Unkiah picked her up carefully and carried her to the waiting cart. Subbiah climbed in by her side, and ordered the driver to walk by the head of the ox when it started, so that any sudden jerking might be avoided. They moved off gently. Sundaramma was sound asleep.





VII

THE NEW CHILD-WIFE

VALPULA SUBBIAH'S first wife was not naturally a wicked woman. She knew her husband would return at early dawn with a new child-wife, her much-petted, spoiled niece, the one whom she had always disliked—perhaps because for over five years she had suspected that she would be brought into her home. Subbiah had given no orders when he left, yet she voluntarily got up at lamplight and cleaned the floors throughout with the sacred cow dung and water. While the floors were drying, she took the grain that she had put to soak the night before,

The New Child-Wife

and rubbed the little green kernels painstakingly between her hands, until they became pure white. Then she ground them and made the sweet cakes that every Hindu relishes. Letting the lime powder sift through her fingers, she covered the entrance way in delicate tracery¹ and also made a large design on the floor of the dining-room, in front of the household idol. She had time to adorn herself, also, even putting the dark paint under her eyes and the red pigment on her forehead.² She saw the cart coming slowly over the hill, just before it came down the road that turned in to their street. She brought in the little jinka that she herself had bought of a wandering tribe of players for Sundaramma. Her heart ached for the child, and for herself, too, but she was only a woman and need not think. She had but to worship her husband as god. She was preparing for his coming now, with religious devotion.

The cart stopped at the door.

Even this early in the morning, it was surrounded by several children and two or three men. They were all curious to see how the little bride, who had made so much disturbance a few weeks ago, would act now.

"Sundaramma," said her husband in a stern voice before they entered the village, "you may continue crying and sulking and screaming if

¹ Note 37.

² Note 38.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

you want to. But if you do, I'll beat you when I get you home, as you never have been beaten before. However, if you walk into the house as a happy child ought to walk, I'll let you go home again for another visit as soon as the town's people understand that I am master of my own house and my women also."

Sundaramma knew that he would do as he said. Her only hope was to walk into the house as a happy bride. The bystanders saw it all, and were relieved and satisfied.

"Valpula Subbiah's new wife was glad to return to her husband's home," they said contentedly to each other.

"Yes," answered a kind-faced man thoughtfully, "all women want husbands. It is their nature." Thus Valpula Subbiah's social position and the purity of his orthodox caste customs were above reproach.

With one end of her koka drawn over her head Sundaramma slipped out of the end of the cart and ran into the house, only to burst out crying in fresh agony as she saw the place where she had cried so much on her wedding day. Now Subbiah did not care whether she cried or not. He paid very little attention to her. At meal times she was seldom ordered to serve him. Subbiah was really a kind Hindu, and even sad days pass. Sundaramma could not always cry.

The New Child-Wife

Unless there was extra water to carry, her aunt would not let her go to the caste well because she wanted to go herself both morning and evening. But when allowed to go, her aunt went also, and hurried her home before she had much chance to visit with the other women. Unless with an older woman who accompanied her to the temple, or for an occasional ride in a closed cart, Sundaramma could not leave her husband's house.

Her daily life was not physically hard. She mixed the curry stuffs sometimes, pounded the grain, and made the dung-cakes for fuel. Sometimes she collected the dung in the road, with her aunt, very early in the morning. She was scolded often, and beaten, too. She tried to keep out of her aunt's way, so that she could escape the mistakes she would surely make in the work, and the scoldings and the whippings that were sure to follow. Then her aunt was even more angry because she was lazy, she said.

But with all of these troubles, Sundaramma's home-life was much pleasanter than the lives of several of her friends, whose troubles she heard about at the well, or from her aunt, or from the occasional venders and mendicants who were admitted into their courtyard.

This was an unusually small Hindu household, as Valpula Subbiah's parents were both



The Revolt of Sundaramma

dead and he was their only son. Two cousins lived with him. One was a tongue-tied man, who had a wife and three children. The other was a widow,¹ who took care of the children, brought the baskets of grass for the cattle, cleaned all of the brass ware, carried the water for cleaning and their baths. For all this she received in return one meal a day, and was blamed and cursed for everything. The different families did not live in the same rooms, or dine together, but the only entrance to their houses was through the same courtyard and gate.

The weeks had become months, and nearly three months had gone by. Sundaramma's brothers had been over on business but her husband had not let her return with them. They had said her mother would come when the harvest was over.

¹ Note 39.



TAT SAUITUR UAREN'YAM
BHARGO DEVAS'YA
DHIMAH! AHINO YO.
NAN PRACHODAYAT

VIII

A WEE ARRIVAL

Om! Om! Aum! Aum!!!

"MY mamma is coming! My mamma is coming! Oh, mamma," sobbed Sundaramma with joy, as she saw her mother come through the gate.

"My own little bright eyes," sobbed the mother, as soon as she could speak, "how you have changed! You look so thin and sad! I am going to stay with you a long time and then take you home with me for the hot season."

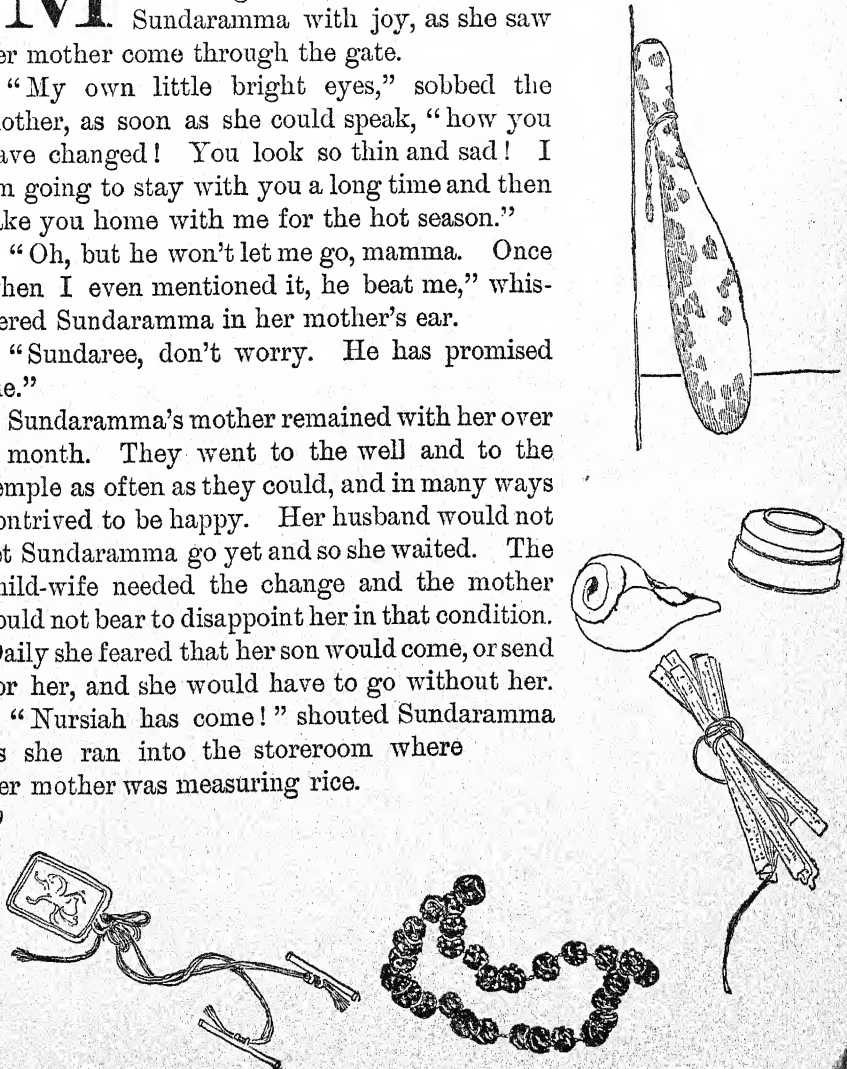
"Oh, but he won't let me go, mamma. Once when I even mentioned it, he beat me," whispered Sundaramma in her mother's ear.

"Sundaree, don't worry. He has promised me."

Sundaramma's mother remained with her over a month. They went to the well and to the temple as often as they could, and in many ways contrived to be happy. Her husband would not let Sundaramma go yet and so she waited. The child-wife needed the change and the mother could not bear to disappoint her in that condition. Daily she feared that her son would come, or send for her, and she would have to go without her.

"Nursiah has come!" shouted Sundaramma as she ran into the storeroom where her mother was measuring rice.

53



The Revolt of Sundaramma

"Father is very sick," he said, "and he wants to see you and Sundaree. We must go at once as the doctor says that his time is almost gone. He just cries for Sundaree."

"Were the gods asleep? He will get better. Doctors make mistakes. Priests have promised me that I will never become a widow. They say the gods never curse one who honours the priests as faithfully as I have done," said the mother in a grim, determined way, as she went to get ready. There was no doubt now about Sundaramma's going, so she quickly packed their clothes into a small bundle, and then went to get their food ready, so that they could eat while the ox was taking a necessary rest before returning.

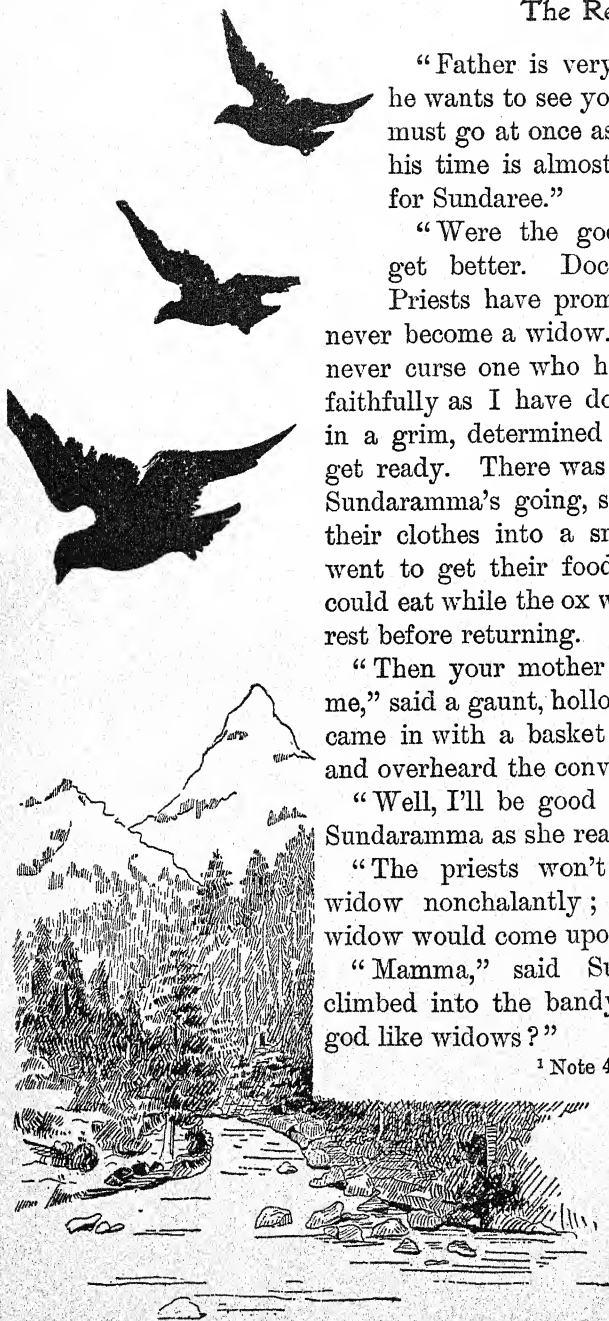
"Then your mother will be a widow like me," said a gaunt, hollow-eyed woman as she came in with a basket of grass on her head, and overheard the conversation.

"Well, I'll be good to her anyway," said Sundaramma as she realized the truth.

"The priests won't let you," said the widow nonchalantly; "the curse of the widow would come upon you."¹

"Mamma," said Sundaramma, as she climbed into the bandy, "why does not the god like widows?"

¹ Note 40.



A Wee Arrival

"I don't know, child. We are just women and can't understand holy things," she answered.

"Nursiah, why is it?" she asked.

"Why, Sundaree, I don't know any more than your mother knows about such things. Since the world began, every one knows that the gods made women to serve man and so of course if the man dies, a wife's work is done. They say her sins cause his death,"¹ said Nursiah.

"Then my father will surely live," cried Sundaramma, "because my mother has always given so much to the priests."

"Widowhood comes as the results of sins committed in a former birth," said Nursiah. "But mother loves the gods and the priests so much that she must have been religious in her former birth. 'Fruit trees from fruit seeds grow.'"

As they realized all this, and also the ceremonies that she had performed to prevent widowhood,² they became happy, confident that their father could not die.

For nearly two months after the stroke her father hovered between life and death, and then one morning Sundaramma was awakened by hearing her mother scream:

"Oh, my beloved, where art thou?"

¹ Note 41.

² Note 42.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

She found her mother lying flat on the ground, crying out in her agony, "Who has taken the door of my house?"

Sundaramma rushed in to her father's room and heard them say, "He has been dead several hours." He had died during the night. They called the Brahman priest. It was a very serious case. The family were heart-broken because the priest should have performed the expiation ceremony before death. For this a few drops of pancha-gavia¹ are poured into the dying man's mouth, then the dying man must recite in spirit, if he cannot articulate distinctly, certain mantrams which purify him from all internal sin. Then a cow and calf are brought in, her gilded horns sometimes tipped with bracelets and rings of brass, silver or even gold; wreaths of flowers are hung about the cow's neck, and a new cloth hangs over her back. The dying man takes the cow by the tail, while the priest prays that the cow may lead the dying man by some happy road into another world. Then he gives the decorated cow, with its calf, to the Brahman.

Finally the priest said that if they gave the Brahmans silver pieces of money, the sum total to equal the price of the cow, he would perform the expiation ceremony and it might be effective. It was all they could do now for their

¹ Note 43.

A Wee Arrival

father, and so the brothers consented. He was washed and shaved by the barber, dressed in clean clothes, smeared with sacred cow dung and, wearing the symbol of his god on his forehead, he was placed cross-legged on a sort of bed of state. Towards night of the same day the men followed the open litter, splendidly decorated with flowers and green leaves and bright-coloured paper, to the burial ground. The ceremonies connected with the funeral lasted three days.

"Mamma, were the gods asleep? Why did they not heed the priests' ceremony to shield you from widowhood? Ask the priest, mamma," said Sundaramma.

"I did ask the priest, Sundaree, and he said that the ceremony only promised that I should rule my house while I lived, and a widow is as dead. The ceremony had proved true, he said, for your father had not married another wife. Then when I told him I ought not to be a widow after paying him so much to guard against it, he replied, 'You accursed dog! His time has ended. You vile creature, to cause the death of the father of your children, why should your time also not end?'" and the suffering mother huddled in a heap on the floor.

"Well, the priests and the gods, too, are hypocrites and demons," said the angered Unkiah, who had entered in time to hear her answer.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

"I hate them," sobbed Sundaramma.

"This religion isn't sensible. I've often thought about it, but it's the religion of our ancestors and the best religion we have ever heard of. Mohammedanism is even worse. What can we do?" pathetically asked the disconsolate and almost broken-hearted mother.

"Do?" shouted Unkiah, as he strode out of the room. "Leave the temples and the money-grabbing priests alone!"

Nevertheless the brothers submitted because they did not know how to escape it, when the priests came and performed a ceremony very similar to that performed for Brahman widows, only their mother's hair was not shaved off. Her jewels and bright clothes were removed; thereafter she was not permitted to wear a bright jacket, but only an old, faded cloth of one colour. Her reign in her home was over. Henceforth she must obey her elder son's wife.

She could not do as much for Sundaramma now, and so they suffered together. Her sons were kind to her, more kind than their religion allowed, but they did not know half that went on among the women. Their mother was the least in the home, the slave who was never supposed to rest.

The weeks slowly became months. The hot season had come. Sundaramma had been sick for several days. The priests had performed

A Wee Arrival

various ceremonies. The midwife had tried every expedient, according to her experience, and Sundaramma had become worse and worse; now she was unconscious.

"Is this the result of all my faithful service to the priests?" moaned poor Sundaramma's distracted mother. "Is it not enough that I am a widow? Must you take little Sundaramma, too, before she even becomes a mother?"

In her anguish of soul she cursed the gods, then moaned and groaned at the side of the bed. All night long the sympathetic women, coming and going, crowded into the little bedroom, and tried everything they could think of to help. Sundaramma had convulsions, and some of the women, afraid of the evil spirit within her, fled from the room; others knocked their heads against the floor and moaned in fear and distress. All of a sudden the cry of a wee little baby was heard. Oh, how the house rejoiced!

At break of day the proud grandmother was seated on a flat stone giving Sundaramma's baby its first bath. They were disappointed because it was a girl, but then Sundaramma would live and it was her little baby, so the grandmother loved it already. She poured the "six and one" pots of scalding hot water—for the Hindu may not say the sacred number, seven. From time to time she would stop and

The Revolt of Sundaramma

pull open the apertures of the body, and blow into them "so that they would not collapse."

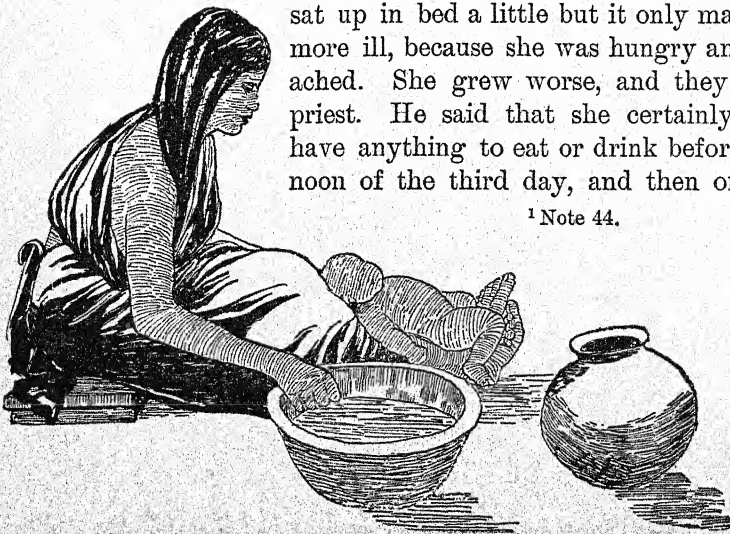
They helped Sundaramma to sit in the doorway, so she could see the women admire her baby. But she cried when the baby cried and so they took her back to her bed.¹

"Mamma, I want a drink of water," called Sundaree, after the baby had been put to sleep.

"Water! When your baby is not yet six hours old? My sweetheart, it would kill you. You cannot have any water until your baby is three days old," said the mother decidedly.

"Oh, mamma, I'm so faint. I could hardly wait until you had finished with the baby. Just a little bit. Mamma, I'll choke," sobbed poor Sundaramma. All day long she begged for one drop of water, but no one dared to give it to her. She walked slowly out into the courtyard to get a little for herself, but the women were frightened and refused the water. The next morning Sundaramma had a high fever, that increased as the day advanced. She sat up in bed a little but it only made her feel more ill, because she was hungry and her head ached. She grew worse, and they called the priest. He said that she certainly must not have anything to eat or drink before the afternoon of the third day, and then only after a

¹ Note 44.



A Wee Arrival

ceremony, which he would perform, could it be safely given.

The next morning Sundaramma was unconscious, moaning and tossing in delirium. About four o'clock in the afternoon the priest came and performed the ceremony of reciting several mantrams, and, after receiving his present, went away. Then they gave Sundaramma water every time she asked for it, or when she moaned they poured a little into her mouth.

In the morning she was conscious but very weak. They helped her walk out into the courtyard and she lay on a string mat out in the sun. They gave her curry and rice to eat, and she rapidly regained health and strength. The ninth day they gave her a mother's first bath and the priest performed the purifying ceremonies for herself and the house.

Sundaramma was weak and cried over the baby so much that her widowed mother kept it in her charge as much as possible.

On the twelfth day¹ they named the baby Sundaramma, after her mother. This ceremony is performed by the priest, who calls the name of the child three times in a loud voice. Then he is given a present and departs.

After the baby is three months old it is safe to take it outdoors, and so the father came to take home his wife and first-born child.²

¹ Note 45.

² Note 49.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

"Oh, Sundaramma, just see what he has brought you!" cried the excited mother as she came into the kitchen, where Sundaramma was nursing her baby.

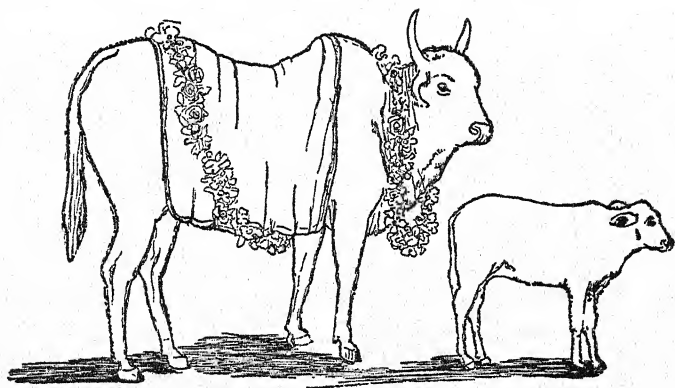
"Why, Sundaree, how thin you are!" said the proud father as he looked at his little wife and his wee daughter. A girl is welcome even in India, if she happens to be the first-born after long years of waiting. He took the baby, while the women examined the yellow satin jacket all embroidered with white beads, and the silk koka. Sundaree was much pleased with the unusually pretty presents that he had brought her.

It was not so hard to leave home this time, because the reign of her brother's wife was domineering. She was anxious to show her baby to her aunt, too, and she knew that henceforth she would be first in her husband's affections. Yet she cried hard when she had to leave her poor widowed mother to her hard fate as servant in the house with her own children, where she had ruled so recently. Sundaramma had visited with her widowed mother as freely as ever, but of course no one else in the women's apartments would be expected to take any notice of a widow. "Oh, come and live with me," called Sundaramma as she realized all at once what her going meant to her lonely mother.

A Wee Arrival

They drove away, and the poor lonely widow returned to the mill to finish grinding the grain for the next day.

“Why is it that I must make my home with my son and become his wife’s slave, doing her bidding in the house while she enjoys her children? Yet I did the same way to my husband’s mother,” she thought. “Why does not some one find out a religion that teaches us to be more kind? Our gods, though, are even worse than we are.”



IX

A DYING REQUEST

“**W**HAT long fingers it has!” said one of the women as she examined the little baby when Sundaramma alighted from the cart.

“What crooked eyes it has!” said another, not because they were in reality crooked, but because every Hindu is taught no one must be complimented in regard to looks, lest the “evil eye”¹ be also attracted.

“The legs are hopelessly crooked; probably she will never walk,” said one of the old women with intense satisfaction beaming from her face as she straightened out the chubby, dimpled feet.

“She won’t live,” said the aunt as she eyed the baby enviously. “Such large brown eyes; that kind always die.”

Sundaramma understood that her reign had even now begun. She was conscious of her superiority and she hugged her baby all the closer.

It was much harder for her now, because her

¹ Note 46.



A Dying Request

mother hitherto had taken all the care of the baby. Every one was so busy that they did not have much time to help her. One day Sundaramma was so tired of the crying, teething baby, that when as usual she had tied it on the little string cot, she grabbed the brass chembu and went to the well. She had done this occasionally and so no one made any note of it.

"My baby is so heavy," said Sundaramma to one of the women at the well, "and it cries all of the time. Last night my husband beat me terribly, just because I cried to go home, or to have my mother come here and help me take care of the baby."

"It is your fate," decidedly answered the woman; "but when that awful pain comes in your head and stomach, so that you can't eat and you want to die, why, you close your eyes until you see light flashing in the darkness of the spirit world, and then rub your fingers between your toes and the pain will go."¹

"That is nonsense. Everything in religion is nonsense. I had rather jump into this well," said poor, discouraged Sundaramma.

"Yes, it is easier to die than to live; but where will you go to? As quick as you enter the spirit world all of the gods will begin to clamour, 'She tried to escape the lot we gave her, did she? Well, we will send her back as



¹ Note 47.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

a dog or an outcaste woman.'¹ You better wait until your time is ended by the gods. Who knows but that if you are faithful to the priests you may be reborn a man?" encouragingly assured the orthodox woman.²

Sundaramma's resolve was postponed for that day. She had talked so long with this older woman at the well, that she was now afraid to go home. Her aunt might even whip her, and how hungry her poor baby must be! Oh, she had rather go home to the beating and her heavy baby than jump in the well and be reborn an outcaste woman.

The house was quiet. Could she believe her eyes? Her aunt had fed the baby a little rice, and the bowl still stood near, but now the aunt was patting the baby to sleep. "She loves the baby now and maybe she will help," thought Sundaramma as she hastened out to the kitchen before she was seen and began her work there.

"Sundaree, Sundaree!" called her aunt. Sundaramma went to the kitchen door in fear and trembling, but her aunt, trying to scowl, said, "Have you finished grinding that grain? Hurry up and then take that basket and gather up all the dung-cakes on the walls. The fuel basket is empty." Sundaramma hurried back to her work with joy, sure that she would not get a whipping.

¹ Note 24.

² Note 26.



A Dying Request

From that time forward, Sundaramma and the aunt were better friends, and the little baby was seen as often with the aunt as with the mother.

Two years passed by, and the baby Sundaramma was the pet of the house, toddling everywhere, playing in the street, always going with them to the well.

One day when Sundaramma and her little girl were returning from the well, they heard weeping and lamenting in their home. A messenger had come with the sad news that the aunt's younger sister and baby had both died the night before.

"Yes," said the runner, "as soon as the funeral ceremonies are over and the house purified, he will marry Danam Kotiah's girl. She is in the mission caste school and can read and write. She is only eight years old, and he is afraid those white foreigners will make him trouble."



The Revolt of Sundaramma

After much consultation, it was finally decided that the aunt should go and help until after the wedding.

Sundaramma could not get her husband's meals satisfactorily and attend to the house and baby, too, so her mother was sent for. Those were happy days and weeks and months for Sundaramma, for her aunt spent most of the time with the sister's children, as their new mother was so young she could not help much. She stayed most of the time with her own mother, who permitted her to continue in the caste school until fifteen months later.¹ Then the Hindu custom urged the final ceremony and the missionaries were helpless.

"Sundaree, I want to talk with you," said her mother, as Sundaramma came into the room where her mother was lying down. She had been miserable for several days with a headache and low fever.

"Isn't your headache any better yet?" asked Sundaramma sympathetically.

"Perhaps I feel better; but, Sundaree, I want to tell you something before my time is ended," said the mother calmly.

"Oh, but, mamma, you are not going to die," and Sundaramma burst into tears, as she hugged her mother tightly.

"Does any one escape death?" said the

¹ Note 48.

A Dying Request

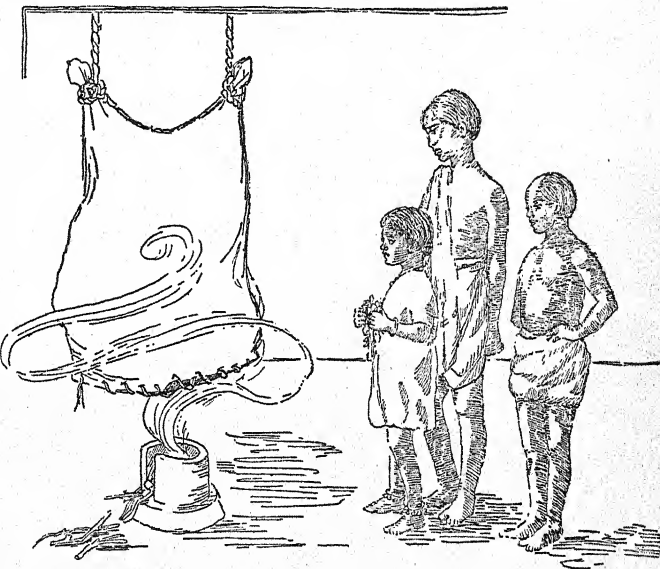
mother as she patted Sundaramma's head, and rearranged the flowers in her hair. "Only the gods know when my time may come, but I want to talk with you while I am quite strong and well.

"Sundaree, you know that people say in our village that I am the most religious woman there," said the serious mother, anxiously.

"Is there another woman in the town whom other women worship? Is there another house in the town where Brahmans come oftener than to ours?" replied Sundaramma with great pride.¹

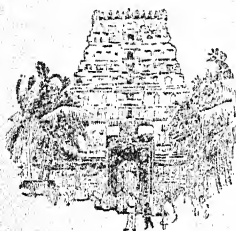
"Yes, yes, I have always loved the idols and the priests. All my life long I have obeyed them implicitly and I have given to them so much that I have been beaten for it again and again, as you yourself know," said the troubled mother.

¹ Note 50.



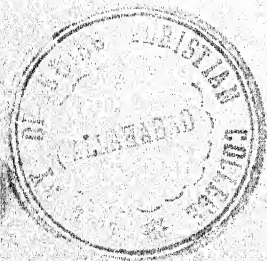
The Revolt of Sundaramma

"Oh, mamma, was that the trouble that time I found you tied up in a burlap bag, after I had hunted all the afternoon for you? I remember I screamed so that the boys came running in and we let you out, and then when father came home he whipped you for it," said Sundaramma reminiscently.



"Yes, but I did not mind the suffering," said the earnest mother, "if only the gods would bless my family and save me from widowhood, and if possibly in another birth I might be reborn a man or into a higher caste. I was determined that the gods should find me faithful. Now, Sundaree, what has it all amounted to? I am an accursed widow. Because I made your wedding, according to our most choice religious rule,¹ fulfilling the demands of our priest, my sons cursed me and forbade me to take any present whatsoever to the temple. The priests all scorned me then, when my money was gone, and then when I became a widow, they lied. They told me plainly many times that if I would feed the Brahmans, one hundred of them, for six and one years at an annual feast, that this act alone would make me ruler in my house as long as I lived. Am I not alive now? Have I not lost the respect of my sons, and relatives, and neighbours, and become less than the most menial slave in my home?"

¹ Note 4.



A Dying Request

"Sundaree, do you remember that long pilgrimage I made your father take with me to Orissa? ¹ You were such a little girl. It was the year of the great red famine," said the disheartened mother.

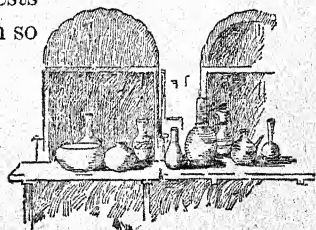
"When you cried so much, do you mean that time? I remember you would not put salt in father's food or you would put sand in, or you would burn the rice; every day you did something, so that his evening meal was spoiled. He beat you every day and finally he tied your thumbs together over that old beam in the storeroom, and he left you suspended there with your mouth tied up," said Sundaramma tenderly.

"Yes, I had made up my mind that I would make him go or die in the attempt," said the mother with pride.

"I remember father would say, 'If you don't cook my food better, I'll get another wife and you shall be her slave,' then you would scream and we children would scream and father would get so angry and would go away," said Sundaramma.

"Your father knew that I would make it hot for another wife. He did not dare to try that. Yet he was so obstinate that I nearly gave up controlling him. He did not believe in priests at all. He wanted to give them just enough so

¹ Note 51.



The Revolt of Sundaramma

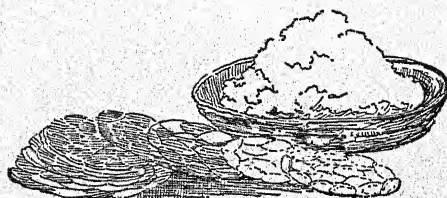
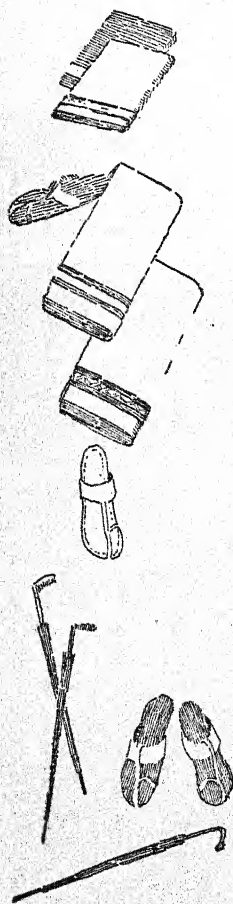


that they would let him alone. I felt different. I said, 'Life is a shadow,' and I'll live for Swarga,' and so I just had to make him go. I could not go alone. Every day I put aside a certain amount of grain from our food, and planned until I had saved enough for the priests to assure us the pilgrimage would be successful. Your father grumbled about it for many months but he did not want to support another wife, and when I promised that I would be as a happy bride every time he came into the house, if he would only go with me, he finally consented.

"There in Orissa we fed one hundred Brahmins. We gave to each of twelve Brahmins a head-cloth, and one white blanket, and to each of three Brahmins a pair of shoes and an umbrella. We gave to the chief priest a pair of ruby earrings and a cow. After the ceremonies were over and we came away from the temple, your father was as happy and excited as I was. He said it had cost him over a year's profit but was worth while after all.

"We had been staying in the temple. The priests and Brahmins had been so kind to us. They gave us ghee and vegetables, but when we returned there that night, they said, 'It is not permitted. No one may stay here after the sacrifices are made.' We had planned to stay

¹ Note 52.



A Dying Request

a few days in that holy place. You see, we had given them all our money, thinking we could stay as easily after the sacrifices as before them. The Brahmans gave us nothing. No one was friendly to us and we had to start home at once.

"We lay down under a tree that night. Your father was so angry that he could not sleep. He said the priests and the Brahmans were thieves, who picked your pocket in the name of religion and then pushed you out of the temple, stranded, to make way for the next blind victim.

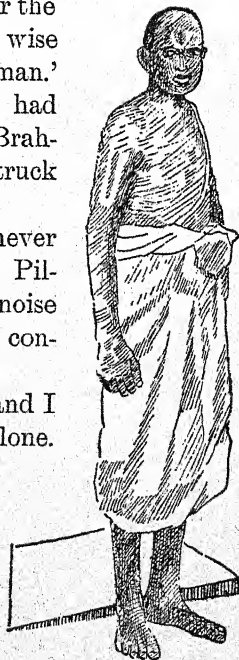
"He declared that we were both fools to come and that he never would listen to a woman's voice again. He said, 'No wonder the sacred writings say that the wisest of all wise men is one who never puts his trust in a woman.'

"Then when I reminded him that he had given all his wealth to the priests and the Brahmans, who were men and not women, he struck me and tied up my mouth.¹

"That night it rained and your father never got over the effects of that drenching. Pilgrims were sleeping everywhere and their noise awakened us before daylight, so that we continued our homeward journey, too.

"When we returned home your father and I were so angry that our priest left us alone.

¹ Note 53.



The Revolt of Sundaramma

Then the Brahmans came and congratulated your father, and were so anxious to hear about all of the doings in that sacred temple at Orissa, that your father hid his anger and told of the high respect which had been shown him and of the large presents he had given. Nearly every day the Brahmans came and conversed with father. It was great prominence. They gave you children guavas and custard apples and little packages of sugar pinned with cloves. We were very proud of the pilgrimage.

"One day, a fateful day, our priest came and said, 'Two weeks from Friday is the auspicious day for your feast.'¹

"'What feast?' I asked.

"'What feast?' asked he in surprise; 'I told you that after you had given the feast and presents at Orissa, that you must repeat the same here on your return, within three months, or the pilgrimage would be of no avail.'

"He had never told me anything about it. I screamed and cried, and finally implored him to accept a present instead, but he said that he could not because all the Brahmans were expecting the feast. They knew the custom, how was it that I did not know? Then he went away. Oh, how I dreaded to have your father find out about it!

"I could not find any other person in our

¹ Note 54.

A Dying Request

village who had been to Orissa, to perform the same ceremony. They said that they were expecting the feast, however, as the priest had promised it while we were in Orissa.

"Your father's anger knew no bounds. You see, talking with the Brahmans, he had made so much of our pilgrimage that the feasts and the presents in our town would have to be very elaborate, much more than they were in Orissa."

"But, mamma, why did he have to do it?" asked sympathetic Sundaramma.

"The Brahmans said the curse of an unpaid vow¹ was upon our house and they refused to walk past the house. One morning, your father found his jonulu all trampled down and the two swamy bulls (sacred cattle that wander at large) in his field. Two days later, one of the buffaloes died and your father came in to the house and said, 'We are helpless. The Brahmans are devils. Cursed be the day I listened to a woman!'

"We mortgaged the property for that feast. It cost us much. The Brahmans smilingly flocked around your father and helped him with the arrangements. Your father was soon happy again with all the prestige given him.

"But when the feast was over and the presents made, these same Brahmans paid very little attention to your father, Sundaree.

¹ Note 55.



The Revolt of Sundaramma

"Sundaree, I don't believe this is the true religion. It cannot be. How can the God of nature,¹ the God who made us so beautiful, be a god who would be pleased to be worshipped as dwelling in these hideous idols? Sundaree, it isn't true.

"It seems there are people, a long ways from here, who do not believe in Hinduism, or Mohammedanism, either.

"Sundaree, I know my time is nearly ended. This is my dying request: if you, Sundaree, ever hear of another religion, examine it and see if it is more sensible than this one. Promise me. Remember this, that you cannot possibly be more faithful than I have been and as I look back over my life now, I know everything was in vain. But the God of nature knows that I tried and suffered in my search for Him. Promise me, Sundaree, that you will search for Him, in another religion."

Sundaramma was sobbing so hard she could hardly promise, for she realized, as she held her mother's hot, fevered, bony hand, that the end might be very near.

"Oh, mamma, what will I do without you!" moaned Sundaramma in distress, but her mother, exhausted with her long talk, said, "I will die happy, Sundaree, because your path will lead to the light."

¹ Note 56.

X

A FOREIGNER'S VISIT

FIVE years have passed since Sundaramma's mother's death. Sundaramma is a tall, graceful young woman of nearly seventeen. She is standing on the steps of the well, draped in a beautiful sea-foam green silk koka. A silver belt holds it in place. Emeralds adorn her hair and ears. Around her neck is a close-fitting band of gold richly set with precious stones. Heavy silver anklets, from which are suspended little balls of silver, are clasped on her saffron-painted feet.

The women help her put her heavy brass pot on her head and she goes laughing and talking down the road with several women from the well.

A crowd had gathered near their temple and just as they passed by on the outskirts, they saw a white man, wearing such a funny head-dress.

"Why, our tongue has come to him!" said one of the women in surprise. They walked slowly, and listened, and heard him say,—
 "'There is none other name under heaven given



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among men, whereby we must be saved,' save Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Creator."

"Why, the Creator is Brahma," said one of the women; "how dare he call him that queer name?"

"Wasn't he faded and tired-looking?" asked another.

"But who was he?" asked Sundaramma.

"I know," said one of the women, who had been brought up in Madras. "He is one of those white men, who live upside down on the underside of our earth. Of course there they can't get any sun and so they are sickly and bleached, just like the green grass is under a stone."

"Poor things," said another; "no wonder they like to come over here."

"Well, do those sickly people have another religion, too?" asked Sundaramma.

"Yes," said the enthusiastic Madras woman, who was glad to air her knowledge; "their religion is much better than ours, especially for girls and women. I went to a high caste school until I was seven, and then my father said I knew enough and made me stay at home. Our priest objected because I went in the first place. He said the schools just blinded our eyes, while the white people stole our liberty. My father did not believe it but he took me out because mamma made such a fuss. The out-



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castes and the low castes have gone tumbling over each other into this new religion, because they are taught that they are as good as Brahmans. Isn't it absurd? The truth is, the outcastes from that country have come over to help the outcastes here, and it has nothing to do with us."

Sundaramma went into the house all excitement and told her aunt about it. When their husband came home that night and was resting on the pial¹ out in front, the white man, accompanied by the head man, came through the street. Stopping at each house, the munsiff² invited them all to come to the public square that night and see pictures of his country that he would show them on the great whitewashed wall at the rear of the temple.

Every one was so excited they could hardly wait to eat their evening food. The men rushed off with their night blankets to wrap around them, when the heavy dew should fall. The caste women waited until it was quite dark, so that the men would not see them and send them home again. They stood off in the shadows between the houses, ready to run if the meeting should suddenly break up, or if one of the men should discover them there. All the children that could walk had gone with their fathers and the babies could not talk so they were quite safe.

¹ Note 7.

² Note 57.

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"Why, those buildings look larger than our temples," said one of the women in surprise.

"I wonder if all those buildings are temples," said another.

"Show us the picture of one of your gods," called out one of the men in the audience.

"Our God, your God and my God," said the white man with a smile, "is a Spirit. We read here in His book :

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them : for I the Lord God am a jealous God.'"

"How do you serve your God then ?" called out some one from the audience. They were all so interested in the white man's words that they forgot the wonderful pictures.

After a half hour answering their questions, he called them back to the pictures again.

When they saw the picture of the elevated railroad, the men moved closer and asked scores of questions. After many interior and exterior views of public and private buildings had been seen, some one called out, "Why don't we have such things?"

"Like gods like people," said one of the young men ; "our brains are like the brains of our gods—wood and brass." They all

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laughed at this, and then a long discussion followed.

The tired women had stayed until the meeting seemed to be breaking up. It was nearly midnight when they returned but the men did not come in until an hour later.

Sundaramma lay thinking: "So this was the new religion that my mother prophesied must come. But that Madras woman said these white people were outcastes. My mother did not want me to get down into an outcaste religion. She meant a new religion for caste people," decided Sundaramma, and she finally fell asleep.

The next day every one was talking about the meeting. But several weeks passed by and Sundaramma had almost forgotten to think about the new religion, because no one seemed to know anything definite about it. One day as she was going home from the well an outcaste girl of about her own age, whom she used to know, was coming out of a caste neighbour's courtyard. She had been there to deliver a pair of shoes that her father had made. Ordinarily Sundaramma would not have spoken to her, but possibly she knew more about this new outcaste religion.

"I haven't seen you for a long time," volunteered Sundaramma.

"No, not since we were little girls. I used

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to come over to your house with my father, once in a while, when he mended your well-bucket," said the younger girl.

"How many sons have you?" asked Sundaramma.

"My wedding isn't even talked about yet," said the younger girl, blushing.

"Oh, how disgraceful! You must be over fourteen years old. Can't your father make any debt?"¹ asked Sundaramma anxiously.

"We are Christians now, and Christians don't marry until over fifteen years old, and sometimes not even then if they don't want to. God loves them if they don't marry and so perhaps I never shall marry. I want to be a school-teacher or a Bible woman," said the girl.

Sundaramma's little girl came running after her and so she had only time to say:

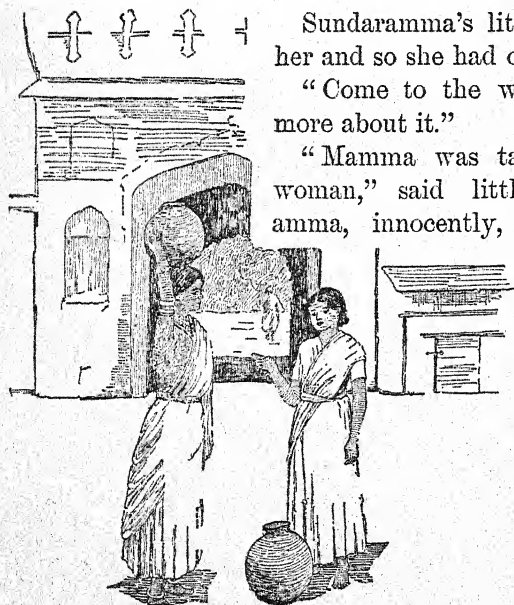
"Come to the well to-morrow and tell us more about it."

"Mamma was talking with that outcaste woman," said little seven-year-old Sundaramma, innocently, as she rushed into the house.

"What about?" said the irritated father.

"Why, she isn't married yet, and she said the true God does not want us to

¹ Note 58.



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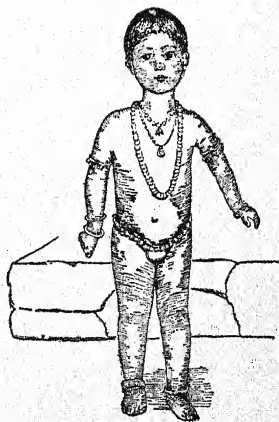
get married so young," said Sundaramma excitedly.

"You want to get your religion from the outcastes and the foreigners, do you?" exclaimed the angry husband. "Don't you go near the well again for a month. I'll see what the priest is up to, letting low-caste women hang around our well."

Sundaramma dared not try to explain. She bore her punishment as indifferently as she could, so that she would not be kept in permanently.

When she was free to go to the well again, she heard some one say, "The father of my son says that this new religion is just a trick of the government, a scheme of the white people to get all of the dirty no-caste people on their side and then gain control over us caste people."

"Well, that is not true," stoutly affirmed the Madras woman; "it cannot be true. In the white people's religion, every one belongs to the same caste. They say that God loves us all just alike. They say that Brahmans made this caste, so that they could live without working, by receiving our taxes to them as lords. White people dine with any one they want to and they may marry any one they want to. They never, never punish widows either, when their husbands die. It's a lovely religion, but it is too easy to be true."



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"Who ever heard of a God loving widows!" exclaimed a proud woman sarcastically.

"It is absurd," said another resentfully. "And besides, if the people were all of one caste they would all want to be Brahmans and how could they live? Some must be farmers and others must be weavers."

Sundaramma had to leave the well then, but she went home full of the strange ideas and she was telling the women about them so earnestly that she did not see her husband. He stood at the door and listened, then he came into the room and the women were speechless in fear. He grabbed up a stick and beat both of his wives, and called them the most vile names that he could think of. Then he went out into the courtyard and lay down in the sun on the string cot, awaiting the chuckler¹ to mend the leather bucket that he was using in the irrigation well.

The screams of the women died down to inaudible sobs after a few minutes.

"I'll never bother about that hideous new religion again," said dishevelled Sundaramma, as she peeped out at last and saw that her husband had gone; "every time I have heard about it, I have got into a scrape. The devil must surely be in it."

"Yes, the low-caste women are hypocrites," said Sundaramma's aunt; "they believe in the

¹ Note 59.

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new religion, just so they may go to school and need not be our slaves."

"Religion doesn't change them, though," said Sundaramma; "they are outcastes just the same."

"Our men must know the white people's religion is deceitful, and so of course they are angry when they see us women so stupidly excited about it. We'd better let it alone," solemnly advised the aunt.



XI

THE IDOL SPEAKS

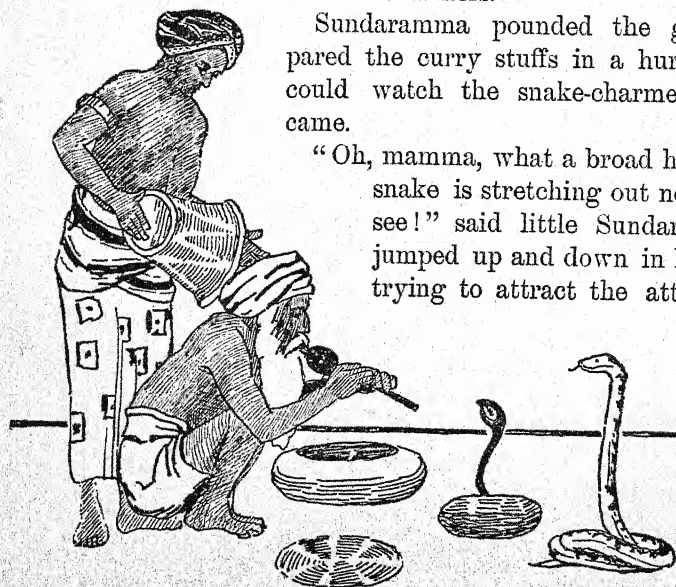
TWO years passed by from the time Sundaramma first heard of Christ. She had almost forgotten about Him. No one ever spoke of the new religion now. She had heard once, a long time ago, that the white preacher, who knew all about the God who loved women—even widows—had gone to a larger place to work.

One day when she went to the gate to buy some vegetables of a street vender, she heard that snake-charmers were at the corner of the next street.

"Go and tell them I'll give them four annas if they will come and play with the snakes in front of our house," she said to her little girl, who went flying down the street to tell the charmers.

Sundaramma pounded the grain and prepared the curry stuffs in a hurry so that she could watch the snake-charmers when they came.

"Oh, mamma, what a broad hood that cobra snake is stretching out now! Mamma, see!" said little Sundaramma, as she jumped up and down in her excitement trying to attract the attention of her



The Idol Speaks

mother, who stood with the caste women just within their open gate.

The snake-charmers were surrounded by people, chiefly of the lower castes and the outcastes.

"Get away from there, you dog!" yelled one of the caste men as an outcaste child of four or five years happened to back up into the path that had been cleared for the caste women in the enclosure to see the performance.

"Who is that woman in white?" asked one of the women. They all turned to see a woman dressed in a clean, white koka, delicately embroidered in gold. She had one end of the cloth drawn over her head. No one suggested that she might be an outcaste woman. She seemed so quiet and modest that they were sure that she must be a caste woman from some other country.

"Where do you live?" asked one of the older caste women, as the other stopped near them, seeking a way to get across the caste path.

"Why, it is Saramma!" said Sundaramma in surprise. "It is Kottu Ragieh's girl, from the outcaste palem."

"Why are you dressed like that?" asked one of the women.

"Is it the new religion?" asked Sundaramma.

"Yes and no," laughed Saramma; "I would



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be dressed as my palem people are dressed, were it not for this new religion. Yet this new religion is not concerned about dress. Any one may wear what she will."

"Why are you different from your own caste people? Are you better than they?" asked an inquisitive woman, eyeing her sharply.

"The people will call you soon and I can't explain now why I am dressed differently, unless it is because I, myself, am different. But I am not any better than my people. See! the snake-charmers are going to move on now. I wish you would let me come some day and tell you all about the white people and the way they worship God. What harm will it do you to hear about it? Can any one make you be a Christian?" asked Saramma earnestly.

A Brahman priest came through the crowd and one of the alert caste women quickly swung the gate shut so that he could not see who had been conversing with the low-caste, Christian woman.

"What harm would it do, elder sister," asked Sundaramma tenderly, of her aunt, the next day, "if we let Saramma come over here and stand at the door as the green vegetable sellers do? One could not harm our caste more than the other."

"Some one would tell him and we would get another beating," said her aunt spitefully.

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"No, our fate is against us. What can women do, if they do believe? They will drive us away from our house here, and then who will support us? We will have to wait until the men believe. Have we any duty save to follow the men?"¹ said the aunt decisively.

"Yes, it is written in the sacred Scriptures, 'To serve their husbands with reverence and willing obedience, is the sole duty of women. Through the discharge of that duty they attain heaven,' so it is not our work to inquire into other religions," said Sundaramma convinced.

A few days after Sundaramma took her little daughter with her to the temple. It was Ugadi, the New Year day of the Hindus, which falls on the day of the new moon in the month of March. The feast lasts for three days, and is much more elaborate in the temples than in the homes. As Sundaramma lay prostrate before the idol, by the side of her little girl, she heard a young Brahman woman of the highest, most strict sect, moaning by her side:

"Swami, what wrong have I done him? Am I not a virtuous wife, faithful and pure? Have I not given him children? Who will bring them up? Did I not always cook good food for him? Did he ever find grit in his rice? Is there anything lacking in my treatment or concern for

¹ Note 32.



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him?" She sobbed so loud in her earnestness that Sundaramma heard her tell of how patiently she had borne her husband's beatings and of how she had worshipped him, after each beating.

"O Swami, have I not treated the father of my children as god? In what have I been faithless? Wert thou revelling with the other gods and didst thou not see the gifts of cloths, grain, cattle, money, ghee, vegetables, and even jewels that I have given the priests and the Brahmans in the name of the feet of my holy guru? O Swami, spare the father of my children, say his time has not ended yet. Speak to my heart this once. Do not take the pillar of my house," she sobbed with such anguish that Sundaramma sobbed with her in her distress. Then the idol spoke:

"Woman, daughter of deceit and lust, thy sins in thy former life were revolting. Thy children's most noble father is now suffering from the effects of thy sins. Give the priest, at once, the necklace of gold mohurs¹ and he will perform the magical ceremony that will dispel the influences which are paralyzing the sinless father of your children. Quick! See the priest at once and give him the necklace." The Brahman woman rose in great excitement, sobbing with joy, and unclasped the beautiful

¹ Note 60.

The Idol Speaks

necklace of sixty mohurs and handed it to the priest, who, strangely enough, met her at the side of the idol as soon as she stood up.¹

"Give me also your anklets, so that the efficacy of this terrible ceremony shall not be turned into a curse. I heard what the great god said to you, and the responsibility that I have to thwart your sins causes me to tremble," said the priest, who was now shaking all over, while the beautiful necklace rattled ominously in his hand. The woman stooped down and unclasped her heavy silver anklets, valued at fifty dollars each and handed them also to the priest, who quickly disappeared in the little room at the rear of the temple. The Brahman woman knelt and prayed a while, then wrapping her cloth around her and over her head, she went slowly down the temple steps. The women and several men followed her with great reverence. Had not the god spoken to her! She stood near the one-ox cart and let the worshippers worship her. Then she climbed in and crowds followed the cart, even though the mat was hung down at its back, so she could not be seen.

"If I were only rich enough to pay for such ceremonies then the gods would talk to me also," sighed Sundaramma.

Just as the cart turned into the Brahman

¹ Note 61.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

street they heard the wail of mourners, and then they saw the crowd in front of the woman's house.

"The great light is extinguished. Gurran Kuppayyagaru died half an hour ago," said one of the Brahmans as they slowly approached the cart. The woman within the cart shrieked and then was still. They lifted her out and carried the limp form into the courtyard. The wailing and lamentations were deafening.

"The priest did not have time to perform the ceremony," explained Sundaramma as she told all about the poor Brahman woman at home.

"The rascals! The priest knew he was dead. I saw him come from there, when the mourners began to wail. Boddupu Ramayyachendra worked his scheme well. It is all a matter of money," muttered Subbiah, as he angrily went out of the door and began to tell the circumstances to others lounging there on the veranda.

The men knew what the women never suspected, that the priest was a ventriloquist and on rare, profitable occasions, spoke through the idols.

"The priest made nearly fifteen hundred rupees just this afternoon, off of that one woman," said one of the men angrily.

"We are helpless. Our fathers have left us this religion and they would have escaped it had there been any possible way," said another.

The Idol Speaks

"If we could only all stand together and refuse to let our women go to the temples any more, the priests would soon be helpless," suggested another.

"Oh, a woman without religion is unmanageable," declared another decidedly; "don't tell the women these things. They could not understand."

"We know, of course, without any doubt, that there are some holy men and that this is our Kali-yuga,¹ the cycle of degenerate times," replied a wealthy landowner. "I have thought about this evident scheming so much, and about the vile actions of our gods, worse even than the vilest outcastes, and I know this religion must be a long ways from the true God. It is probably one of the lower rounds of the ladder. At any rate, it is the most sensible religion we have ever heard of. The white people's religion sounded well, but there is an inside there, too. We cannot change our religion until we understand another one and can examine it well enough to see if the fruits of the new religion are any better than the one we already have."

"But look at the improvement in the outcaste palem, even among the untouchables," said one of the younger men.

"Yes, I have been surprised at the changes in them," replied the landowner, "and I am

¹ Note 62.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

waiting to see what the next move of the government may be. Will they educate these dogs to become learned freaks, in these degenerate times, so they will even outwit the holy Brahmins themselves? When they have educated enough of these outcastes, will their next move be war? The new religion is one of the worst features. The English people know that we are tired of our own religion, because we are ashamed of the gods and the lives of many of the priests and of the nautch girls, so they are using their religion to gain political supremacy. If it is truly a religion of love and justice we shall know sooner or later. I wish some one else would come and let us ask more questions about this new religion and see if we could not corner them."

"Well, if this new religion is so good and just, and the white people have always known about it, then God is not a just God if He loves them when they are so heedless or so selfish that they have not told us about it," said a kind-faced, thoughtful-looking goldsmith.

"Have the white people known about this new God for a long time?" asked another who had joined the crowd.

"The white man said that their God was incarnated as a man over two thousand years ago. That is what puzzles me. Why did not their ancestors tell our ancestors years and

The Idol Speaks

years ago? It must be that they are as we Hindus are. We hope that we will find Swarga ¹ through these gods, and temples, and ceremonies, and sacrifices, but we do not know it. The white people hope that they will find heaven through Jesus Christ, their God, but they cannot know it or they would have to tell us. If they knew it, they could not keep it, while we are suffering so with this vile, senseless religion," said a tall, grave man, emphatically.

¹ Note 52.



XII

A MEETING IN THE MUNSIFF'S HOUSE

"**D**ID you hear what he said?" gasped Sundaramma. "The holy priests rascals!"

"You are a block of wood. He meant that the devils, who killed the Brahman before the ceremony had time to work, were the rascals. Did he not say plainly that Bodupogu Ramachendrayya worked his plans well in trying to save the Brahman in spite of the woman's sins?" said the aunt, whose faith was still unshaken.

"He said it was all a matter of money! What did he mean by that? Of course ceremonies cost money, but that is nothing to make him so angry," replied the unsuspecting Sundaramma.

"I suppose he is angry because he is not a priest, too, so that he also can get fifteen hundred rupees in one afternoon. It would be easier than farming," said the aunt dryly, "but it isn't our fate. There is no use in getting angry over it. Men always act so angry over the presents that the priests get. That trait

A Meeting in the Munsiff's House

ought to belong to us degenerate women instead of to religious men."

"Men are more like our gods;¹ they don't need to have religious traits, as we do, who are created with a deceptive nature," remarked Sundaramma. "I heard a Brahman priest say once that he could feel the earth tremble when he even thought about some of his more powerful mantrams.² He had to stop thinking quick, or the whole earth would have been destroyed. If he had pronounced one syllable wrong or given the wrong accent, the force of the destroying power of that mantram would have killed him. Ah, no wonder priests charge when they risk their lives in that way."

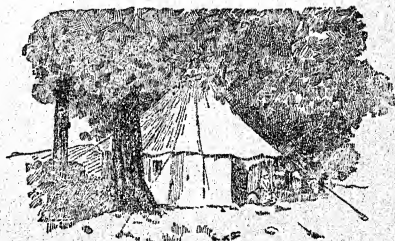
A few days later the women at the well were again talking excitedly about the new religion. The head Brahman had let the white man pitch his tent in their sacred grove, and some one had seen a white woman with them.

"Let's go far enough to see if we can't see her in the grove," suggested one curious woman. They needed only the suggestion for they all started at once. As they drew nearer the tent, they saw that it was surrounded with outcastes, and lower castes, and several groups of Brahmans also. They did not dare to go any further, so they reluctantly retraced their steps.

On their way home two women dressed in

¹ Note 63.

² Notes 64 and 27.



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white, as Saramma had been, came out of the village munsiff's¹ house and said that the white woman was going to hold a meeting there that afternoon at three o'clock, and would they not all like to come?

"What does she want to see us for?" inquired one of the frightened women.

"She wants to tell you about the true God and answer any questions you may want to ask her about her God, or her country, or herself," said one of the Bible women.

"She has a wonderful music-box, that plays music and sings and talks in our language, too," said the other Bible woman.

Every woman was determined to see the strange white woman and the wonderful music-box, so they hurried home to get their work done.

The munsiff is the head of the town and usually lives in the largest house, so that all of the higher caste women, save the women of the zenana houses, would not fear that their caste would be defiled. Long before three o'clock the room in the cattle shed was crowded and some of them were sitting in the courtyard in the sun, when the white woman came in. "They say that white women sit in men's chairs all of the time. She did not seem the least bit embarrassed. She went right and sat

¹ Note 57.

A Meeting in the Munsiff's House

down in the chair without blushing," said one of the women.

"Look at her smile," laughed another woman. "I wonder what her voice sounds like."

"Listen! She is talking," said some one.

The woman told about her trip there and about a high-caste wedding that she had attended in their neighbour village, and then the women began to feel very friendly with her because she was a friend of the high-caste people and enjoyed weddings, as they also did. Then she told them "the sweetest story ever told," and the women heard of Christ going about and doing good, and they loved Him. They hated Herod and Judas, and clenched their fists; some of them were ready even to fight for Jesus Christ. When the speaker told of the trial that took place so hurriedly before daybreak, and of how Christ was hurried to crucifixion, nearly every woman wiped her eyes or covered her face with her cloth.

"Is there any one in all the world who, having heard of Him, does not love Him?" asked one of the sweet-faced little women.

"I think we all love Christ for His life and death for us. But He said, 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments,' and we find that harder work," said the white woman. Then they saw that one could not obey the first and

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greatest commandment of all, if they held to caste.

"It is not our fate. We were born in caste and we will die in the caste of our ancestors. Is there any one who is able to save us?" inquired one woman spitefully.

"God isn't fair to let you white women have so much freedom and respect, even as if you were born men, and then let you into heaven, too, whether your husband wants you there or not, and not to give us a chance," said another woman when the missionary had finished explaining how English women lived without caste.

"Well, would it not be polite in you, if you kept your own religion and did not interfere with us in our own religion?" asked another woman when she realized that the civil law would take her children from her if she became a Christian, and that she would be driven from home or treated as an outcaste servant if, possibly, she were allowed to remain.

"Let me ask you a question first," said the missionary. "Would it not be polite if in famine time your caste neighbour should sit by her well full of water, and let you and your family sit by your well that had gone dry?"

Quick as a wink, the woman asked, "Is your religion like a well full of water in famine time?"

A Meeting in the Mansiff's House

"It is," replied the missionary, "but it will be hard for you to break your caste. You will suffer ——"

"We suffer anyway. Shall we be beaten any oftener if we get down into this new religion?" said another practical woman.

"Yes, indeed we will," and Sundaramma related her experiences.

"What does your husband beat you with, a leather strap or a stick?" asked an inquisitive woman.

"Well, I know no woman would serve a man, if she did not have to," said another woman with emphasis, when the missionary replied that Christian men did not beat their wives. "Tell me truly, why, then, do you serve your husbands, if you are not afraid of a beating?"

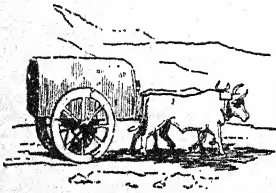
"Because we love our husbands," replied the missionary.

"Oh, yes, the father of my son told me that was the difference between white women and ourselves. You love your husbands before you are married and we love our husbands after we are married. We think our way is so much the better," replied a bright young woman.

"I'll tell you about my life to-morrow," said the missionary, "so that you will better understand why we love our husbands more and more, even after we are married. I want you to hear one of your own Telugu songs now, written by

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a Brahman Christian. Then you will have to go and get your evening meal, but to-morrow we will meet at the same time and in this same place. To-morrow is your last and only chance for another year, before I can come here again, so please come as early as you can and bring some one with you."



The next day nearly twice as many women were packed into the cattle shed and courtyard. The newcomers did not care to hear about any other religion but they were anxious to see and hear the gramophone.

One woman standing near the door had a huge pile of dung-cakes¹ on top of her head. She was taking them home for fuel, and had been attracted by the music. "I heard you yesterday," she said, in a high key, "and I just want to tell you that there is no use of your wasting your strength talking to us. We like your religion. But how can we change? Who will support us? Can any one break through caste and live?"

"Caste² is very great," said the missionary, "but the living God is much greater. The cattle on a thousand hills are His, so He will surely feed you, but it will be very hard for you. You will need to be very brave, but it is easy to follow One who loved you unto death."

¹ Note 65.

² Note 66.

A Meeting in the Munsiff's House

"But how do you pray to Him? Teach us to pray," said one of them earnestly.

"How does your Jesus treat widows?"¹ one woman asked while the missionary was trying to teach them a very short prayer of two sentences.

"It is written," was the answer, "that pure religion before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction ——"

"Visit widows?" shrieked a widow, whose hard life had marked her face as well as her soul. Then the missionary described the ordinary life in America, free from caste and custom, so far as their salvation was concerned, and told about a courtship and a wedding, also about a funeral and the after life of a widow.

"What is the fate of your childless women?"² asked a poor, heart-broken woman, who had no children and whose husband had married again.

"It is time for me to go again, but always know this; God loves you, whether you have children or not, whether you have a husband or not. I think He loves the widows and the fatherless children most of all," said the missionary.

They did not break up to go home as on the previous night.

"Talk longer. Our stomachs are not yet full," they said.

¹ Notes 67 and 39.

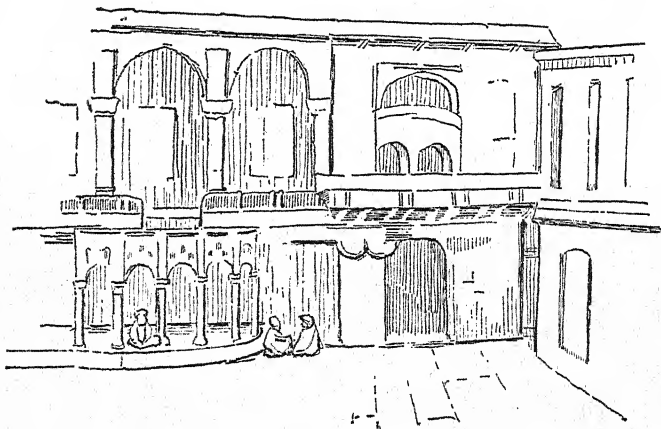
² Note 6.



The Revolt of Sundaramma

"But your husbands will be home for their evening meal and it will not be ready, unless you go now," said the missionary reluctantly.

"Oh, we can stand one more beating easily," said one bright-eyed woman, who looked so sweet that it was not surprising when she added, "but he doesn't hurt me, though."



XIII

A MIDNIGHT FLIGHT

N EARLY three months had passed by since the missionary's¹ visit. Sundaramma had been shut up again and beaten still more for trying to follow Christ. Two of her friends had been brave and prayed their little prayer in spite of the ridicule in their homes, but they had given it up as useless.

"We shall have to wait until she comes again and we can ask her to send us a caste teacher to show us the way," they said to each other hopefully as, one by one, they gave up the struggle and waited for the day when some one should come to their village to lead them into the new religion.

"Do you know Sitamma, the wife of Arepogi Rama Row?" asked a Brahman widow excitedly, as she passed Sundaramma on the way to the well. "She has run away from home and gone to live with the white people, in their outcaste religion."²

"Why, that man belongs to the most strict

¹ Note 68.

² Note 69.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

sect of the Brahmins!" said Sundaramma in surprise. "How did she happen to go?"

"Her baby was born in the mission hospital last year, and ever since that time she has been talking about the new religion," replied the Brahman widow; "after her husband burned her tongue last week, and made her worship the *tulasi*¹ she has been submissive. They thought the devil had left her, but now that she has gone they know that she was only waiting for a chance to run away."

"Well, perhaps she has fallen into the well," suggested Sundaramma. "What makes you think she has descended into the new religion?"

"The Brahmins have just returned from Podili, and they saw her and talked to her, and she said she would never return unless they would promise her that she could worship Christ only," said the widow woman. "They say that she is insane. Poor woman, and from such an honourable family, too! They begin the funeral ceremonies to-day."²

Every one at the well was talking about it. "Didn't you notice that white woman fumbling with that white cloth³ that she wiped her face with?" asked one of the women suspiciously. "I was afraid then she had some magical charm concealed in it and that she tried to get it out

¹ Note 70.

² Note 71.

³ Note 72.



A Midnight Flight

to work it on us, but I watched her so close she did not dare to shake it. Didn't you notice that she asked me what my name was? I knew what she was up to and so I quickly made up a name."

"Well, I'm glad that she did not ask me my name, then," said a large-eyed, thoughtful woman, "for I trusted her so much that I should have told her my true name."

"I've heard that they carry white powder around with them," said an imaginative woman; "it's so fine that you can't see it or detect it in any way, but if you breathe it in you have to get down into this new religion."

"Why did you not ask her to show it to us?" said a bold, independent woman. "If I had known about that I should have asked her. It would be good to let her see that we know more than she thinks we do."

"I hope that she will never come here again. Such a hypocrite, making believe that she was our friend," said the suspicious woman who had spoken before. "But if she does come we will all stay away from the meeting and she will have to go away again."

Sundaramma went home from the well. A Brahman woman had followed Christ, and she had thought a Naidu, a caste woman, was too good! All day long her head was in a whirl.

¹ Note 73.



The Revolt of Sundaramma

"I don't believe any of that stupid talk at the well," she said to her aunt.

"But it may be true," said the aunt; "certainly it is some great power that would make a Brahman woman suffer all that she has suffered, and now to join with the 'untouchables!'"

"It is the power of the true, living God," replied Sundaramma.

"It may be," assented the aunt. "But if the Brahman woman dies soon, or becomes raving crazy, whose power will it be then? It is dangerous to leave one god and follow another."

"But if there be only one God, one Supreme God, and our own Hindus agree to that," said Sundaramma thoughtfully, "what can the harm be? All the lesser gods are powerless if Jesus is the living, Supreme God."

The next week Sundaramma's aunt went to visit her deceased sister's children and their husband went also, expecting to return the next day. This was an unlooked-for opportunity and Sundaramma sent for the father of the outcaste Bible woman to come over.

"Do the missionaries get pay for their converts?" asked Sundaramma after they had talked for a little while. "I heard that they get one thousand dollars for every Brahman convert, and about seven hundred rupees for one of my caste. Isn't it true? Of course they can support us a long time on that."

A Midnight Flight

"Why, who cares enough about you to give all that? They don't know what caste is. After the caste people become Christians, they treat us all just alike. Saramma has passed her examination and has been home for nearly a week. She is going to teach in the school there next year," said the proud father.

Sundaramma talked to him as long as she dared. He wanted to send Saramma over to answer all her questions but Sundaramma answered, "What do I want to talk about the new religion for?" in a loud voice, so that the mischievous widow, who had been watching intently for a few minutes, should surely hear.

That night Sundaramma could not sleep. "It surely is the religion that my mother was waiting for. It is so pure and kind and just, and oh, just think of God dying for me, a woman!" and she sobbed in her glad joy. She checked herself, so that no one should hear her and finally after a long struggle, she said, "I'll do it. Jesus God, I'll go and learn all about you, too, and then come back and tell my people. If the Brahman woman can leave her children and husband for you, help me to do it, also." Falling down on her face she prayed, "Jesus Christ, the true God, show yourself to me. Speak to me."

The next morning Sundaramma went to the

The Revolt of Sundaramma

well early, and sent her little girl to tell Saramma to meet her.

"If I get down into your religion, shall I have to eat and sleep with low castes?" asked worried Sundaramma.¹

"We are not low caste just because a few proud, deceitful Brahmans call us so," said Saramma, "and if I obey God I am just as good as you can be in His sight. God loves us all. Don't you think you are just as good as a Brahman?"

"Better than some of them," Sundaramma slowly acknowledged, admitting the easier fact that she was as good as the higher caste people, but finding it harder to see that then the lower caste people would possibly be as good as her caste. "But low-caste people cannot be equal to high caste."

"Don't you think if we were all of one caste it would be much better? Then you could go anywhere you wanted to, or speak to any one you wanted to, without fear of making God angry," said Saramma.

"May I not take my little girl with me?" questioned Sundaramma, asking at last the question that was heaviest on her heart.

"The Hindu law will not permit a mother to keep her child. You will have to leave her and pray to God to cause her to follow you," said Saramma sympathetically.

¹ Note 66.

A Midnight Flight

"Then this religion is not for me," said Sundaramma in despair, as she realized that her hope was useless. "I shall never leave my little girl."

That night Sundaramma cuddled her child all the closer. Her husband had come home and said that her brother Nursiah wanted to marry little Sundaramma. He had offered to give his services at harvest time and a calf in exchange. Her husband had not accepted because he hoped to strike a better bargain than that.

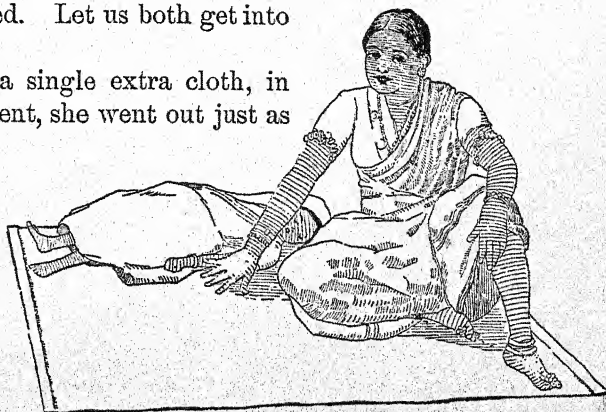
"The day will surely come, and my little Sundaramma must be married," sobbed the mother. "Only two years more at the most and then!" Oh, she hated life, and religion, and all.

"This new religion!" She started and sat right up on her mat. "I'll get into this new religion this very night, and if Jesus is God He will give me my child as a reward, before she is married."

Then she knelt over her sleeping little girl of seven and prayed:

"Jesus Christ, I leave her for you to take care of, but you must give her back to me before she is married. Let us both get into your religion."

Without taking a single extra cloth, in her intense excitement, she went out just as



The Revolt of Sundaramma

she was. It was nearly midnight. She had never been out alone at night before. She was so frightened she could hardly breathe. She ran down the street that led to the outcaste quarters. The sound of her feet frightened her and a dog barked somewhere.

"Saramma! Saramma!" called Sundaramma as she came to the centre of the outcaste village. She had always heard that it was so dirty here, and she involuntarily picked up her *koka*¹ closer—but how clean it was. So this new religion had made even the outcastes clean!

"Saramma! Saramma!" she called the second time, afraid of the sound of her own voice.

"Valpula Sundaramma!" gasped Saramma in surprise, as she came out in the moonlight, wrapped up in her heavy night-sheet.

"I've come to get down into your religion to-night," said Sundaramma simply.

"I have been thinking about you and praying for you. It seemed as if I could not get to sleep," said Saramma. "I am glad you have made up your mind, but the missionary lives many miles from here; we can't do anything about it to-night."

"Let us start now. Quick!" said nervous Sundaramma. "We must get very far away

¹ Note 1.

A Midnight Flight

from here before morning. When they miss me they will search everywhere."

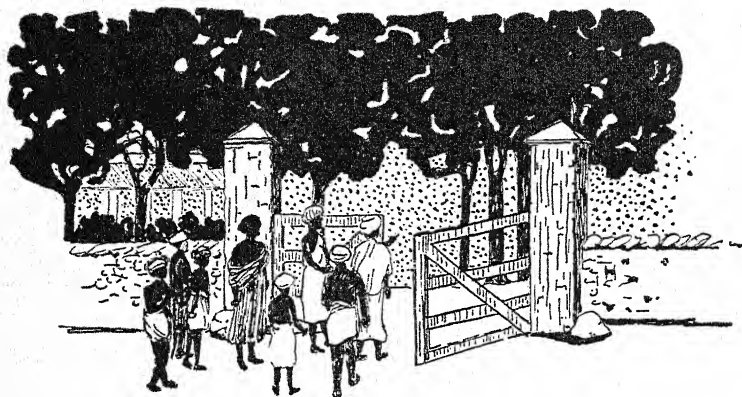
"Do you mean walk it? Just we two at midnight?" asked Saramma in fear.

"Certainly I do. If it is so far let us go quick. If Jesus is God, won't He go with us? Are you afraid?" asked Sundaramma.

"I am afraid, but Jesus will go with us, so there really isn't anything to be afraid of, only everything looks so strange at night," said Saramma.

She put her heavy night-sheet back in the house and the two girls, hand in hand, went running down the country road towards Podili.





XIV

AN ANGRY MOB

"AMMA! Amma!" called some one at the missionary's front door, about eleven o'clock the next morning. She had just returned from a hard morning's work and was tired out.

"Oh, some one has come for medicine," she said, as she opened the medicine cupboard and called, "Come in."

"Sundaramma has really come," said excited Saramma as she came into the room.

At the foot of the steps stood a young and unusually fair caste woman. Her ears were heavy with jewelry. She had much on her arms and neck, and anklets, also.

"I am so glad that you have come. I wish I could invite you into the house at once, but it

An Angry Mob

is best to wait until they have come for you. Since you left your home secretly, they might think we had captured you. Our work will be seriously injured unless your people understand that we have nothing to do with your leaving your home secretly. They must understand that it is a matter between you and God," said the missionary.

Both women were dirty and footsore from their long walk, and Sundaramma's face was all tear-stained. "Jesus is even more glad that you have come," said the missionary, "but your relatives will surely search for you and I want you to stay out there in the shade of the trees, out of consideration for them, until they come." A caste friend in the village brought her water from the caste well and food from the bazaar, cooked by a Brahman and paid for by the missionary.¹ The missionary went up-stairs for her siesta but was soon aroused.

"I dreamed that they were pulling a goat limb from limb in front of the idol," she said as she wakened. "The noise was awful!"

Then the noise came again, nearer than before, and she jumped up. She knew now what it was. The relatives had come for Sundaramma.

She hastened out on the veranda. There they were, over twenty men, ashamed and

¹ Note 74.



The Revolt of Sundaramma

cross and angry, and very tired. They all talked at once, screaming at the top of their voices. Sundaramma stood out alone on the path in front of the door-steps.

"If you get into this cart at once, promising never to mention this dog's¹ religion again, I'll take you back," said Sundaramma's husband magnanimously.

"I cannot do it. Christ died for me and I'll die for Him before I ever promise to worship an idol again," Sundaramma replied. "Let me come back as a Christian and I'll come. My caste is already gone; on the way here I purposely broke my caste by drinking water in a weaver² palem. I am a Christian now."

Then the anger of the men knew no bounds. They yelled at her and shook their fists at her. Then quieting down, they besought her to return with them. They tried to bribe her and even promised not to beat her. When they saw that tears, promises, nothing, moved her, they began to curse her again.

"Slave, give me back my jewels and silk koka that you are wearing," yelled her husband.

"Most of these jewels were my mother's. I will give you what you have given me," said Sundaramma.

"You give me every bit of it," said her hus-

¹ Note 75.

² Note 76.



An Angry Mob

band. "That is all the white people are after—your jewels—and they shall not have them."

"Sundaramma, he does not know about this religion. He thinks that you are bewitched and that this is for the profit of the white people. Let them see that you have come for God alone and that neither you nor the missionaries care for profit," urged Saramma. "Yet you will never get such jewels again," she added wistfully.

"I will not let my mother's jewels go," repeated Sundaramma, as she unfastened the jewels her husband had given her.

"If you gave up all of your jewels for God, your husband might be saved too and bring your little daughter," said an older Bible woman who had joined the crowd now surrounding the mission bungalow.

Sundaramma went into the bungalow, exchanged her pretty silk cloth for a cheap, coarse cotton cloth belonging to one of the women. Folding up her silk koka and piling on the top of it her husband's gifts of jewels, she started out, and then, coming back, said :

"Jesus, I give up my own mother's jewels, too. I trust Thee to give me back my little daughter. Don't let her marry an idolater."

Then she piled on top of the cloth all of her earrings, nose-rings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and toe-rings. The husband greedily grabbed

The Revolt of Sundaramma

them out of the Bible woman's hands and, cursing and talking back and forth to each other, the mob moved out of sight.

They returned to the village and conducted Sundaramma's funeral in effigy. She was dead to them. Within two weeks, Valpula Subbiah had married again.



XV

MAN'S EXTREMITY

TWO years went happily by in the missionaries' home. Sundaramma cared for the baby, and went to school, but the missionaries' furlough was at hand.

"Only three months more and I shall have my little daughter with me," said Sundaramma, coming into the room one evening, after she had been praying and talking with God.

"How do you know?" asked the missionary, who was full of grave doubts concerning the daughter's coming.

"Why, God promised me that in the beginning. You see you are going to America in three months, and according to our custom, little Sundaree has reached the marriageable age. Now you will go and take your baby, but God will give me instead my own little girl," said Sundaramma with her eyes shining.

Then the missionary sent one of his most tactful workers to her village, as he had done many times before, to see if they were at all friendly again, or if he could find out anything definite about little Sundaramma.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

"Amma, Sundaree has been sick with fever, and so the wedding is postponed until she gets well. She is small for her age. She has to work pretty hard. The new little child-wife has a heavy baby boy over a year old, and little Sundaree has to take much care of it. She is better now and getting strong, but the wedding won't be right away," said the evangelist when he reported the result of his visit.

"Did you get a chance to speak to the little Sundaree?" asked the missionary.

"I called her but she was afraid and ran away. I tried to get Kottu Roddy to call her and let me talk to her, but he refused," replied the evangelist.

"Is there no way in which we can get word to that little girl, and tell her that her mother is still living?" asked the missionary.

"No, the people do not want any one to come to their village. Some of the Christians that live near there said that they would try to tell her, but the trouble is she has been told that the devil is in the Christians, the dogs who killed her mother, and so she is very much afraid of them and never goes into their part of the village," said the troubled evangelist.

That night when Sundaramma came in to have her usual quiet talk before retiring, the missionary said :

"'God's ways are not our ways,' and perhaps



Man's Extermity

He is going to let Sundaramma get married and bring her to Him in some other way."

"Oh, no, He won't do that way," said Sundaramma positively. "Every time I pray all of these months, I feel a warm feeling within me, and my heart bounds with joy because it knows that I am really to have my own little girl again. Oh, won't it be good to tell her about this Jesus? And we won't let her get married either until she wants to, will we?"

It seemed impossible to throw even a shadow over Sundaramma's strong faith.

"Would it be wrong to pray that God take Sundaramma or her little girl?" said the poor faithless missionary's wife to her husband after Sundaramma had gone.

"We must ask God again to show us some way to teach Sundaramma that she must follow Him, even in the dark," replied the missionary.

"I hope she won't realize that her daughter is really going to be married there in that caste village, until after we have gone to America," said the missionary's wife, in a discouraged tone.

"Maybe you could go out there and show the pictures again, and one of the workers might get a chance to speak to little Sundaree," suggested her husband.

"No, that would not help. They would be sure to keep her in the house and it would only

The Revolt of Sundaramma

make the people suspicious for you to hold a meeting there without an invitation," replied the evangelist.

They could not devise any practicable scheme and so, with aching hearts, they left it with God.



XVI

THE HAND OF GOD

VALPULA SUBBIAH was sick. A large boil had come on the back of his neck. He had been getting weaker and weaker, with fever and headache. They had tried every remedy they knew—poultices of ragi grain and then of tobacco and powdered sandalwood and mango leaves, but he was not able to bear the pain any longer. All day long he groaned in his agony.

"Send for the priest," advised Sundaramma's aunt.

"Jumula Kondiah had the priest come when his only son had a boil on the top of his head, and the priest tied a cow's hair tightly around the boil and he died in convulsions before morning," said the angry sick man.

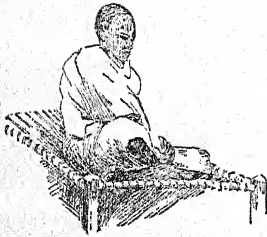
"Well, probably they did not send for the priest soon enough," said the orthodox wife, who was a stronger Hindu than ever since Sundaramma went away. "When convulsions come you may be sure that the demon is struggling to keep possession of the body. The

The Revolt of Sundaramma

child was not strong enough to endure the battle."

"Well, I'm not strong enough, either," said the sick husband as he rubbed his bony arms.

"I will not be a widow," thought the aunt in her anguish. She went to the well to ask whoever might be there if they knew of any remedy that had not yet been tried. The woman from Madras was just coming up the steps.



"When I went to the white people's high-caste school, several of the children had boils on their heads, and in their ears, and everywhere, and then the missionary woman would ask the child's parents if she might not make it well. She would do it right in the courtyard and let us all see. She washed it out after cutting a little hole in it, and then she would put on mango leaves, or sandalwood paste, and tie it up with a clean white cloth. Oh, they would get well so quick!" said the Madras woman enthusiastically.

The wife returned home and the widow went over to the Christian palem, to call Saramma's father to come there.

"You persuade him to go in the hospital," said the wife as she met him at the gate. "Tell him that they will surely cure him. Tell him that they have cured hundreds of people who

The Hand of God

were worse off than he is. Tell him that he will die if he stays here."

"While I was holding my meeting in the hospital this morning, I saw Valpula Subbiah go into the men's ward," said one of the Bible women the next day. At noon Sundaramma heard about the abscess on his head.

"I wonder who will bring his food to him," said anxious Sundaramma as she told Saramma about it. As a caste man may not eat the food provided at the hospital for the patients without losing caste and tainting his soul, according to his orthodox religion, caste patients make their own arrangements for their food, the doctor only stating the kinds they may not eat and the food that must be prepared. Some one must come in with Subbiah's food.

"I'll go to the bazaar this very afternoon," said Saramma, "and if it is little Sundaramma, I can easily prove to her that you are not dead."

Sundaramma came in breathless and excited. Sitting down on the floor by the missionary and the baby, she burst out crying.

"God's ways are so mysterious," she said as soon as she could control her joy. "I never thought of Sundaree's coming this way."

"Well, we haven't got her yet," said the missionary sympathetically; "she may not even bring in the food."

"She is sure to come sooner or later," said

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Sundaramma happily. "Some of them are putting up with our caste relatives and they won't want to come to this low-caste hospital and so they will send Sundaree sometimes, anyway."

In the afternoon, the missionaries went over to a near-by village to the annual association. Sundaramma was in the bungalow with the children.



Saramma had gone to the hospital to watch.

"Valpula Sundaramma! I am Saramma from Peddarakutla," called the Bible woman as she saw the little frightened girl hasten out of the strange hospital. "Your mother is living near here, your own mamma, and she wants to see you very much."

"No, it is not my mamma," said the little girl shyly, and yet relieved because she recognized the Bible woman. "I remember my mamma's funeral. I was whipped so many times then, and the new mamma quarrels with me most of the time and makes me always play with the baby until I get so tired. But I am going to be married myself, when we go home from the hospital," said little Sundaramma triumphantly.

"You just follow me and see if your mother isn't alive," urged the Bible woman. "You stand out in the road and I'll tell her to stand on the veranda and you can see each other and

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talk to each other, without hurting your caste the least bit. Your father came and tried to get her to return home, but she wanted to be a Christian and they would not let her, so they went home and told you that she was dead."

"I'll go," said Sundaramma; "you tell me the way." The caste child had to walk ahead of the Christian from the outcaste palem. It is such a strong custom that the caste people never think of it as being unjust, and the lower caste seldom resent it.

The missionaries' baby was asleep and Sundaramma was sitting on the front veranda trying to get her lessons, but was anxiously watching the road for Saramma.

"Was it—oh, my Father, it is just like you to send Sundaree now. You knew how hard it was to wait. Oh, isn't she beautiful?" exclaimed Sundaramma as she ran down the road to meet her. They hugged each other and cried in their great joy. The poor Bible woman forgot all about her promise to observe caste.

"Oh, mamma, I'll never leave you," said the little daughter as she followed her mother into the house.

"Of course you never will. God has given you to me. I knew He would," answered her mother.

The people of India do not need newspapers

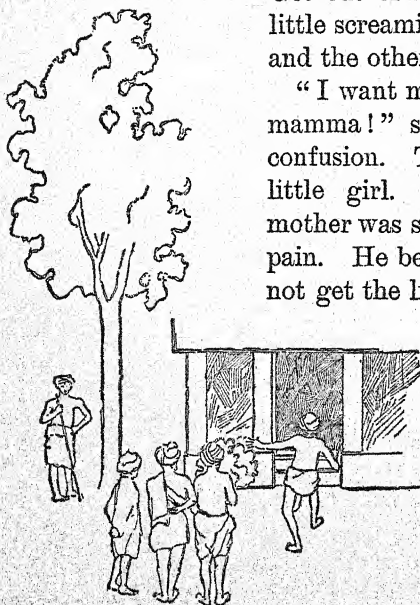


The Revolt of Sundaramma

for the sake of learning the local news. The crowd that collected so quickly took the fresh news at once into every corner of the village. Little Sundaramma's father, lying on a mat on the veranda of the hospital, was one of the first to hear. No one noticed him go out of the hospital gate. As he neared the bungalow, he was so angry that he, too, forgot caste. He had heard that the missionaries were not at home. Several caste men had joined him as he told them of his trouble but they hesitated about going within the gate. Subbiah cared for nothing; he ran into the first room and saw his daughter with her mother in the next room at the very moment that they saw him. They tried to shut the door between them but he pushed it open and caught his little girl by her braid.

"You dog, you daughter of a buffalo! Is this the way you defile your poor, sick father? Get out of here," said the father dragging the little screaming girl, one hand holding her braid and the other her arm.

"I want my mamma to go, too. I want my mamma!" screamed the little girl above the confusion. The mother clung wildly to her little girl. The father was weak and the mother was strong. The father was in dreadful pain. He beat them both severely but he could not get the little girl away from her mother.



The Hand of God

"Come, Subbiah, our laws will give her to you anyway," called the caste people in the yard.

"I won't come," he said, as he continued to fight in spite of his weakness and pain.

"Quick. The missionaries are coming," shouted the men outside.

The missionaries were just in time to see poor Subbiah go limping down the street, followed by a greater crowd than usual. The mother and daughter were sobbing hysterically and the baby was screaming.

"It was hopeless before, we thought," said the missionaries in despair to each other, "but now poor Sundaramma's daughter is doomed. Nothing can save her. The Hindu law will give her back to the angry father and he will marry the poor little thing at once if only to spite us all and show his power. One thing is certain, all of the people on that side of the mountains will now refuse to let us come to their villages for years and years."

They explained the seriousness and the utter hopelessness of the affair to Sundaramma and the workers. They all agreed, and after much talking decided that the only thing to do was to give up the little girl. They all sympathized with Sundaramma. They prayed and wept with her, and the little girl, hugging her mother tightly, kept saying, "Mamma, don't you let me go," between her sobs.

The Revolt of Sundaramma

The missionary went over to the hospital to see the father, but he would not talk about it. He was in great pain and he cursed everything and everybody. The missionary gathered that he had already sent for the priest for his advice. Unknown to all, that village priest had been a silent observer of Christianity and its effect in really changing the very characters of even the "untouchables." He read the Bible secretly and was convinced that he needed a Saviour, but he could not bear to think of losing his honourable, lucrative position and joining with the outcastes and foreigners. No one suspected his interest. He had never talked to the missionaries. They knew of him as one of the priests in the great Hindu temple. But the hand of God was in it and Subbiah unwittingly called for this priest.

"Like mother like child," said the priest the next morning, as Subbiah poured out his troubles to him. His chest and arms and forehead were all smeared with the sacred ashes of the cow. "You can't save your child now. Her mother's devil is in her. Let her go to the dogs and keep your caste pure," advised the priest.

The father was in a rage. He urged the necessity of the wedding, of the work at home, and finally offered the priest a large bribe. The father called for the opinion of other priests

The Hand of God

who were standing near and lounging around the temple courtyard. They did not care anything about one little girl, but they did care about keeping this priest's friendship, for he was the leading spirit in the temple and knew how to make money. He was generous with it, too.

"He is a holy magician," said the priests. "Who dares to say a word when he has spoken?"

"I'll go to my own village priest," said the father in anger as he arose to go.

"Your priest!" said one of the priests in fine scorn, "your priest in that small temple may not even sit at the feet of this holy guru."

The father hesitated, but fearing that he had not yet given up, the priest went a little nearer and said in sepulchral tones, "If you make any more trouble about that little girl, who has gone to the dogs, you will die of that boil on your neck. Leave her alone," he thundered.

That settled it. The father did not dare to mention the matter again.

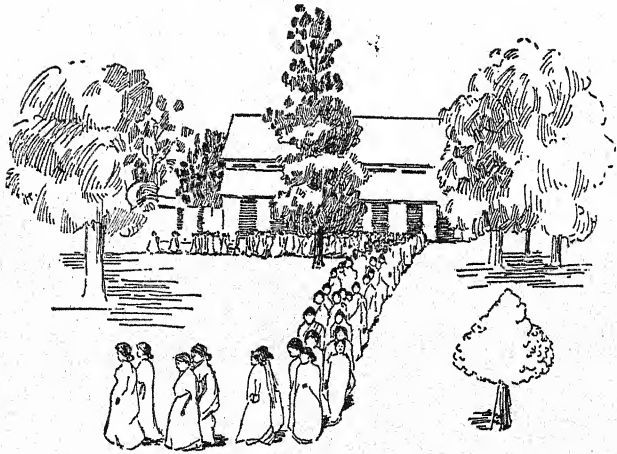
Every one was rejoicing in the compound and in the Christian village.

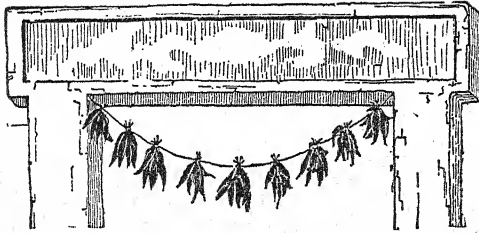
"I knew that God would bring it to pass," said happy Sundaramma. "God caused Cyrus to plan for his servants to go and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and now God has made even Hindu priests want to do His will." They

The Revolt of Sundaramma

had a great praise service and many Hindus came and marvelled.

Sundaramma and her little daughter are in school, preparing themselves to become efficient workers in God's good time.





APPENDIX

(Notes)

CHAPTER I

- | <i>Page.</i> | <i>Note.</i> | <i>Description.</i> |
|---------------------|--|---------------------|
| 12 . . 1 . .
118 | Koka, name of the Hindu woman's dress, usually eight yards of cotton or silk cloth, plaited in the belt to form the skirt, leaving two or three yards to drape over the left shoulder. | |
| 13 . . 2 . . | Marriage laws of the Hindus, according to Abbe J. D. DuBois, p. 21: "An uncle may marry the daughter of his sister, but in no case may he marry the daughter of his brother. A brother's children may marry a sister's children, but the children of two brothers or of two sisters may not intermarry. Among descendants from the same stock the male line always has the right of contracting marriage with the female line; but the children of the same line may never intermarry. The reason given for this custom is that children of the male line, as also those of the female line, continue from generation to generation to call themselves brothers and sisters for as long a time as it is publicly recognized that they spring from the same stock. . . . Thus a man can, and even must, marry the daughter of his sister, but never the daughter of his brother. . . . This rule is universally and invariably observed by all castes, from the Brahman to the Pariah." | |
| 13 . . 3 . . | Infant marriages. DuBois, Chap. VI, p. 215: "The opinion is firmly established throughout the whole of India, that women were only cre- | |

ated for the propagation of the race. Therefore all women are obliged to marry. Therefore women are without honour, or character, and marriages must be arranged early to preserve their innocence. . . . It is no uncommon thing to see an old man of sixty or more, having lost his first wife, marry a little child five or six years old, and even prefer her to girls of mature age."

- 13 . . 4 . . Final marriage ceremony. Laws of Manu, Vol.
76 IX, p.94: "A man, aged thirty years, shall marry a maiden of twelve who pleases him, or a man of twenty-four a girl eight years of age; if [the performance of] his duties would otherwise be impeded, he must marry sooner."

Since the Laws of Manu, 600-200 B. C., many Hindus at their pleasure, under the sanction of this law, decide they "must marry sooner."

- 13 . . 5 . . "High-Caste Hindu Woman," p. 46: "The earlier the act of giving the daughter in marriage, the greater is the merit, for thereby the parents are entitled to rich rewards in heaven."

- 13 . . 6 . . Manu, Vol. IX, p. 139: "Between a son's son
109 and the son of a daughter there exists in this world no difference; for even the son of a daughter saves him who has no sons, in the next world, like the son's son."

- 17 . . 7 . . Pāl, the couch, usually six feet long, built of
85 brick or stone and plastered over smoothly with mud. It is daily cleansed in the early morning, when the floors of the house are also cleaned, by smearing cow's dung mixed with water over the surface. Early in the morning the distressing barnyard odour surrounds every Hindu house, but an hour later, the couch walls and the floor are so hard and smooth and dry that a white satin *koka* is not smeared in contact with the floor, and the odour is as clean and sweet and antiseptic as the characteristic odour of the most modern hospital.

- 15 . . 8 . . Kaffir corn, a name for Indian millet.

- 19 . . 9 . . Karma, the doctrine of fatalism. The Hindus believe that all men are born with their destinies written on their foreheads by the hand of Brahma

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himself. In all adversities, the first remark heard is: "Thus must it have been written on his forehead." When they console one in affliction they most commonly say, "Did any one ever escape that which was written on his forehead!" Where the Christian says, "God's will be done," the Hindu says, "Thus must the prophecy written on the forehead be fulfilled." By making man the mere actor of some written character part, this doctrine constitutes God the author of all crime and hence destroys the very foundation of all morality and all true religion.

- 21 . . 10 . . "Hindu Sacred Books," Vol. II, by J. Murdoch:
 "Even a Brahman who fails to offer the whole sacrifice shall become a crow or a kite for a hundred years."—Lectures on the Laws of Manu.

CHAPTER II

- 25 . . 11 . . Brass chembu, the common drinking vessel. The different sizes although of the same shape are called by different names.
- 25 . . 12 . . "Darbha grass, found everywhere in India, especially in damp and marshy ground. Brahmans always keep it in their houses. It is used in all ceremonies. . . . It is extremely rough to the touch, and if rubbed the wrong way, it cuts through the skin and draws blood. . . . It is supposed to be the hairs of the god Vishnu. . . . An annual feast is celebrated in honour of this sacred darbha grass on the eighth day of September. By offering the grass as a sacrifice on that day, immortality and blessedness for ten ancestors may be secured and another result is that one's posterity increases and multiplies like the darbha grass itself, which is one of the most prolific members of the vegetable kingdom."—DuBois, p. 659.
- 25 . . 13 . . Vigneshwara, the god of weddings. Another common name for this elephant-headed god is Ganesha, the god who is propitiated before every important undertaking.
- 26 . . 14 . . Katika, a preparation of lampblack and oil rubbed under the eye. It seems to enlarge the eyes and make them more brilliant.



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29 . 15 . . "Hindus of good family avoid as far as possible intermarriage with families outside their own circle. They always aim at marrying their children into the families which are already allied to them; the nearer the relationship the more easily are marriages contracted. A widower is married to his deceased wife's sister, an uncle marries his niece, and a first cousin his first cousin. Persons so related possess an exclusive privilege of intermarrying, upon the ground of such relationship; and if they choose, they can prevent any other union and enforce their own preferential right, however old, unsuited, infirm, and poor they may be."—DuBois, p. 21.

30 . 16 . . Sanctity of cow. Sir Monier Williams in "Brahmanism and Hinduism," p. 318, says:—"The cow is of all animals the most sacred. Every part of its body is inhabited by some deity. Every hair on its body is inviolable. All its excreta are hallowed. Not a particle ought to be thrown away as impure. On the contrary the water it ejects ought to be preserved as the best of all holy waters—a sin-destroying liquid which sanctifies everything it touches, while nothing purifies like cow-dung. The ashes produced by burning this hallowed substance are of such a holy nature, that they have only to be sprinkled over a sinner to convert him into a saint." These sentiments are found in the Mahabharata, one of the two great epic poems that has largely influenced the character of the Hindus.

The wife is declared to be the marital property of her husband, and is classed with "cows, mares, female camels, slave girls, buffalo-cows, she-goats and ewes."—Manu, Vol. IX, pp. 48-51.

CHAPTER III

35 . 17 . . Wedding pandal means a booth made of branches of trees under which the most important wedding ceremonies take place. The sacred fig-tree is the Aswatta or the pagoda fig-tree, the tree of God. It is a huge tree, with very large, light green leaves. Vishnu was born under this tree

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and they believe that the tree is Vishnu himself under the form of a tree. This tree is often married with the same costly ceremonious wedding service used for kings, and it is sometimes invested with the triple cord.

- 36 . . 18 . Hindus of all sects and castes agree on two points, however widely they may differ in other respects, namely, the sanctity of the cow and the depravity of woman. For the former see note 16, for the latter :

"Nothing is more sinful than woman. Verily women are at the root of all faults. Woman is poison, she is a snake, she is fire, she is verily all these. The evil dispositions of women are bestowed upon women by Brahma himself. Women have no religious duties; their sole duty is to revere and serve their husbands; through this they attain heaven."—Mahabharata.

"When creating them, Brahma allotted to women a love of their bed, of their seat, and of ornament; impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct."—Manu, Vol. IX, pp. 14-18.

"Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife. . . . If a wife obeys her husband she will by that reason alone be exalted in heaven."—Manu, Vol. V, pp. 147-156.

- 36 . . 19 . . "Through their passion for men, their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this world. Knowing their disposition, which the Lord of creation laid in them at the creation, to be such, every man should most strenuously exert himself to guard them."—Manu, Vol. IX, pp. 15, 16.

"Day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males of their families. . . ."
—Manu, Vol. IX, p. 2.

"Considering that the highest duties of all castes, even weak husbands must strive to guard their wives."—Manu, Vol. IX, p. 6.

CHAPTER IV

- 39 . . 20 . . The ceremonies of the Brahman weddings last eight days but the Shudra weddings last but three days.
- 41 . . 21 . . Manu, Vol. V, p. 147.
- 41 . . 22 . . "Woman is a great whirlpool of suspicion, a dwelling-place of vices, full of deceits, a hindrance in the way of heaven, the gate of hell."
—Proverbs, "High-Caste Hindu Woman," p. 65.

CHAPTER V

- 42 . . 23 . . Black medicine is the opium which is very commonly used by the Hindu practitioners. It is also freely sold in the smallest village bazaar. They, however, do not smoke it.
- 43 . . 24 . . The doctrine of transmigration solves for the Hindu the great problem of the existence of evil and suffering in this world. This belief is not mentioned in the four sacred Vedas but arose with Hindu pessimism in the time of the Upanishads:
- Katha Upanishad:—7. "Some enter the womb again after death . . . others go inside a trunk, according to their works, according to their knowledge."
- Chhandogya Upanishad:—7. "Therefore he, whose conduct is good, quickly attains to some good existence, such as that of a Brahmana. . . . Next he who is viciously disposed soon assumes the form of some inferior creature; such as that of a dog, a hog, or a Chandala (outcaste)."
- Bhagavad Gita:—"As a man having cast off his old garments taketh others that are new, so the embodied [soul] casting off old bodies, entereth others that are new."
- Although this doctrine witnesses of the immortality of the soul, the sense of sin followed by suffering, and that the soul receives due reward of the deeds in the body, yet it is untenable because unjust. The Hindus say that if a man has stolen paddy, he will be reborn a rat and steal paddy all of his life. For one act of theft he becomes a thief all his life! If the soul in the

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rat does not know that his rat existence is a penalty for theft, is it not pure injustice?

- 43 . . 25 . . Buddha, one of the greatest reformers in India, taught that a woman must be reborn a man before she could escape the "Law-Wheel" of endless transmigrations.

"The wisdom of a master derived from former births enables him to accept the law with joy: this is not rare, but a woman . . . is anxious to exhibit her form and shape, whether walking, standing, sitting or sleeping. Even when represented as a picture, she desires most of all to set off the blandishments of her beauty, and thus to rob men of their steadfast heart! . . . Thus, then, should every one consider well, and loathe and put away the form of woman."—Wilson's "Life of Buddha," p. 417.

- 43 . . 26 . . Swami is the common word used for God, priest, the Brahmins, and any government official or person of authority.

- 43 . . 27 . . "Sacrifice was a very natural occupation for the Vedic savages. . . . Savages, as ethnologists themselves have told us, are often very punctilious ritualists."—Max Muller's "Auld Lang Syne," p. 192.

"Formerly men and gods lived together in this world. Then the gods in reward of their sacrifices went to heaven but men were left behind. Those men who perform sacrifices in the same manner as the gods did, dwell after death with the gods and Brahma in heaven."—"Apastamba Brahmana of the Vedas," Vol. II, pp. 7, 16.

The Atharva Veda is full of magical verses. The incredible filthiness of some of these symbolical and magical rites is almost beyond belief—see Aitareya Aranyaka. Magic is mixed up largely with their religion, resulting to some extent from contact with the aboriginal tribes. The sacrifice itself became a piece of magic rather than a divine offering. "Their religious rites are prostituted for the most immoral purposes, for they are supposed to be all-powerful—more powerful than the mightiest of the gods. . . . The sacramentarian theory, *ex opere*

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operato, is in the Brahmanas worked out to its utmost limits. The rite was to them an end in itself. Hence the least error in the form or sound of the mantras (mystic syllables) might prove fatal; but it seemingly mattered little or nothing whether he to whom or for whose benefit the rite was administered, was good or bad, moral or immoral. The rites are the real deities, almighty in themselves."—"Taittiriya-brahmana."

"The gods, having laid down that body of theirs, now were afraid lest the Rakshas, the fiends, should smite that body of theirs. They saw those Rakshas-killing counter-charms."—"Rig-Veda," Vol. IV, pp. 1-5.

"Having by means of these counter-charms repelled the Raksh, the fiends, they restored that body in a place free from devilry."—Vol. VIII, p. 33.

It is priest-craft. All sorts of contortions and ravings of the priests duly affect the gullible devotees with terror. The efficacy of the mystic sacrifice is confused with the power of the priest, or transferred to him altogether. Because of the superstitions of the people of India seven million priests rule not in righteousness but in ritual.

44 . . 28 . . Rice-water is the common drink of the caste people the first thing in the morning.

45 . . 29 . . Agni is the god of fire, and as such is universally worshipped. The actual contact of the fire-god with the body is used to drive out demons of disease and rebellion, not only because it is a powerful god but because of its purifying character.

"God Agni hath come forth to us, fiend-slayer, chaser of disease. . . ."—Book I, p. 28, "Art-harva-Veda."

"With butter in his hall where fire is burning, perform that sacrifice which quells the goblins. Burn from afar against the demons, Agni! Afflict not in thy fury us who praise thee. . . ."—Book VI, p. 32.

45 . . 30 . . Suttee or widow-burning was the common religious practice until stopped by English law in

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1835. It has occurred secretly several times since then, but is now even disowned in some parts. Such women, who ascended the pyre, were numbered among the divinities and proudly worshipped. In order to keep up this infamous practice (DuBois, p. 362): "At times they go so far as to administer drugs, which so far deprive her of her senses that under their influence she yields to their wishes. . . . This beverage they say consists of a decoction of saffron. It is known that dried saffron pistils (*Crocus sativus*), taken in large quantities, cause violent and convulsive laughter, sometimes terminating in death. . . . During the whole procession, which was a very long one, the widow preserved a calm demeanour. Her looks were serene, even smiling."

46 . . 31 . . Bandy is the name of the common two-wheeled cart drawn by one or two oxen.

46 . . 32 . . "No sacrifice, no vow, no fast must be performed by women apart from their husbands; if a wife obeys her husband, she will, for that reason alone, be exalted in heaven."

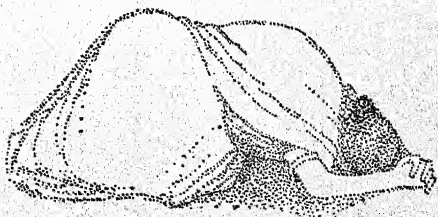
95 "By violating her duty towards her husband, a wife is disgraced in this world; after death she enters the womb of a jackal, and is tormented by diseases, the punishment of her sin." —Manu, Vol. V, pp. 147–156.

"Neither by sale or repudiation is a wife released from her husband; such we know the law to be which the Lord of creatures made of old."—Manu, Vol. IX, p. 46.

"For they [the ancient sages] declare that a bride is given to the family of her husband, and not to the husband alone."—Apastamba, Vol. II, pp. 10, 27, 3.

CHAPTER VI

48 . . 33 . . All Hindu women, even the outcastes, never pronounce their husband's name. The name of her holy husband, her god, should hardly be defiled in the mouth of a woman "full of deceit and lies." Our Christian women, not realizing the cause of the custom, still cling tenaciously to the polite Hindu phrases. "Amma, will you



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please give me medicine for him?" asked a polite Christian teacher of the second generation of Christians.

"For whom?" asked the missionary, wondering whether she could be thus led to say her husband's name.

"The head of our house has fever and sent me to ask for medicine," replied the polite wife.

"When was your father taken sick?" asked the missionary, purposely misunderstanding.

"I do not mean my father. He is well. I mean the father of my children," answered the wife blushing.

"Manikeum, you do not yet speak your husband's name?" said the missionary.

"It is so bold and impudent. I cannot say his name," she replied, almost ready to cry because of the difference of opinion between us. "But," she added, remembering that she had called my custom such hard names, "of course you can say your husband's name. You were brought up differently, and we know that you do not know any better."

48 . . 34 . . 1 Cor. 10: 19: "What say I then? that the idol is anything. . . . But I say that the things that the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."

49 . . 35 . . "By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house."

"In childhood, a female must be subject to her father, in youth, to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent."—Manu, Vol. V, pp. 147-148.

49 . . 36 . . A low estimate of woman's nature and character in general is at the root of the custom of seclusion of women in India.

"Day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males of their family, and if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyment, they must be kept under one's control."—Manu, Vol. IX, p. 2.

"Let the husband employ his wife in the collection and expenditure of his wealth, in keep-

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ing everything clean, in the fulfillment of religious duties, in the preparation of his food, and in looking after the household utensils."—Manu, Vol. IX, p. 11.

Since the Mohammedan invasion with its harem, the zenana life for the Hindu women has become compulsory.

CHAPTER VII

- 55 . 37 . Not so much as a matter of decoration but rather because a goddess used to amuse herself by drawing these patterns and geometrical designs and planting flowers within balls of cowdung, to hold them upright. This artistic drawing, even though so quickly effaced by the bare feet, is most carefully and faithfully done every morning as soon as the floor washed with cowdung has dried sufficiently.
- 55 . 38 . Only caste-women may wear the small circular mark of red paint in the centre of the forehead.
- 58 . 39 . "At her pleasure let her emaciate her body by living on pure flowers, roots and fruit; but she must never even mention the name of another man after her husband has died."

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"Until death let her be patient of hardships, self-controlled and chaste, and strive to fulfill that most excellent duty which is prescribed for wives who have one husband only." . . . "Nor is a second husband anywhere prescribed for virtuous women."—Manu, pp. 157, 158, 162.

A Hindu woman is married to her husband for this world and the future world also. She gets into heaven only with her lord's permission to come and serve him. The only place where she can be without her husband is in hell. "One can even imagine how hard the widow's lot must be, when to the continuous course of fastings, self-inflictions and humiliations, is added the galling ill-treatment which she receives from her own relations and friends. To a Hindu widow, death is a thousand times more welcome than her miserable existence. It is no doubt this feeling that drove, in former times, many widows to immolate themselves on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands."—Devendra N. Das, *The Nineteenth Century*, Sept., 1886.

CHAPTER VIII

60 . . 40 . According to the merit or demerit of a human being, a person may be reborn afresh into the body of a man, beast, bird, fish, or into a stone. The series of births is virtually endless; the common statement is that it is eighty-four lakhs. The Marathi poet, Tukaram, exclaims: "Ah, this fearful round of births! When will it all end?" With the Upanishads commences that great wail of sorrow which, for countless ages, has in India been rising up to heaven. The widow seems to suffer from this belief most of all. They believe that the scenes of her former life must have caused her husband's death and since widowhood is the just outcome of her own deeds, she is very cruelly afflicted and tormented, to expiate the crime. Kindness to a widow might in reality be unkindness, if the gods were not propitiated enough in this life and should cause her to be reborn again as a widow.



61 . . 41 . . When a man dies his wife's work is done. The greatest misfortune that can befall a woman in India is to outlive her husband. The very fact of meeting a widow is a sign of ill-luck, and Brahmins will even return home and will, if possible, abandon their work for that day or perform some ceremony to offset the evil effects of the curse of a widow. She is expected to have her head shorn once a month; she is not permitted to wear jewels or pretty clothes; she does not have any part in the family festivities or wedding ceremonies; her very presence would be an evil omen. Doomed to perpetual widowhood, cast out of society, stamped with the seal of contumely, she is shunned and scorned by every one, even by her own mother. Widows are often kind to each other but they of course have no resources and are helpless to help each other. "Vile creature, you caused the death of my blessed son!" is a common remark of mothers-in-law.

61 . . 42 . A ceremony to prevent widowhood does not seem to be in the Vedas anywhere authorized, and yet the idea is common among the women that a long life of great faithfulness and gener-

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osity to the priests will protect them from the dreaded condition of widowhood.

- 62 . . 43 . . Pancha-gavia, *i. e.*, milk, curds, ghee, dung and urine. This ceremony is one of the most efficacious and is always resorted to when a high-caste man returns from a foreign country before he becomes pure enough to enter fully into caste relations.
- 66 . . 44 . . Hindus know nothing about physiology. The women do not lie down during child-birth or take any care of themselves. A string is tied tightly around the chest so that the unborn child will not pass through the throat and kill both mother and child. Some of their practices are cruel in the extreme because of their total ignorance of the body.
- 67 . . 45 . . Nama-karma ceremony occurs on the twelfth day. The grandmother of the child invites her friends to be present and a feast is given them even if it be a girl, the first one.—See Note 6.

CHAPTER IX

- 70 . . 46 . . This ceremony is performed only by married women, as widows would not be allowed under any circumstances to take part in it. With a lighted lamp at the level of the person's head a specified number of circles is made. It is supposed to attract the "evil eye," and counteract the influences of jealous and evil-intentioned persons. It is often performed several times a day. This Aratti means trouble, misfortune and pain, and not only is it performed for people, but for idols daily and with unusual care and solemnity after the idols have been in procession and exposed to public gaze. It is performed over elephants, horses and other domestic animals, too.
- 71 . . 47 . . Cicero has said that there is nothing too absurd to be said by a philosopher, and we have many examples of the unjust and idiotic twaddle in the hoary writings of the Hindu philosopher. "If a man of one birth insult a twice born man, he ought to have his tongue cut, for he sprang from the lower part of Brahma" (p. 270). "If he



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mention contemptuously their names and caste, a red hot iron rod ten fingers long should be thrust into his mouth" (p. 271). . . . "With whatever member a low-caste man injures a superior that member of his must be cut off; this is an ordinance of Manu" (p. 279). "A low-caste man who tries to sit down by the side of a man of high caste shall be branded on the hip and banished, or"

Why Brahmins Die.—1. "How, Lord, can death prevail over Brahmins who know the Veda and who fulfill their duties as they have been declared?"

2. Righteous Bhrigu, the son of Manu, thus answered the great sages: "Hear by what fault death desires to destroy the Brahmins. Death desires to destroy Brahmins through the neglect of the Veda study, through breach of approved usages, through indolence, and eating forbidden food." "By constantly reading the Veda . . . one remembers his former births" (p. 148).—Laws of Manu.

Babu Norendra Nath Dutt (Swami Vivekananda) belongs to a well-known Calcutta family, some of whose members are Christians. He was not like the orthodox sannyasi, who abandoned all worldly concerns and lived an ascetic life. He established a new order, wearing gorgeous silk robes and lived in "first-class" American hotels. At Chicago he said, "Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth, sinners! It is a sin to call a man so. It is a standing libel on human nature." In New York City, August 29, 1896, he said: "It is the greatest of all lies that we are men; we are the god of the universe. We have been always worshipping our own selves." Such ravings sound incredible. Dean Farrar says, "Every variety of blasphemy and folly has its apostles." The false promises in Hinduism have blinded unnumbered generations." Here is one of them: "He that readeth this sacred, sin-destroying, merit-bestowing history of Rama, like unto the Veda itself, becometh cleansed from all sin." The most extraordinary feat is ascribed to the great god Indra, "Thou hast indeed begotten

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thy father and mother from thine own body." Hindus with boundless credulity accept all this and claim with great pride that their theosophy and philosophy is spreading most encouragingly in the Occident.

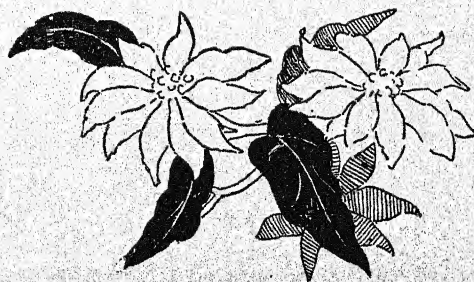
- 74 . . 48 . . The final wedding ceremony takes place as soon as the wife has developed. See Manu, p. 88, "A father should give his daughter in marriage according to rule, . . . even though she has not attained the age of puberty."

"He who takes to wife a marriageable girl shall not pay any marriage money to her father, since the father lost his right over her by hindering the natural result. . . ." (p. 93).

- 67 . . 49 . . "In the fourth month the child should be first taken out of the house. . . ."—Laws of Manu, p. 34.

- 75 . . 50 . . "Whatever exists in the universe is the property of the Brahman," say the sacred Laws of Manu (p. 100), "for on account of the eminence of his birth, the Brahman is entitled to it all; . . . other mortals exist through the benevolence of Brahman" (p. 101). "For the preservation of a cow or a Brahman let him at once give up his life; since this deed will atone for the crime of killing a Brahman" (p. 80). "The slayer of a Sudra gives to a Brahman ten white cows and a bull (p. 131), or let him drink milk for three nights. . . ." (p. 133). "A Brahman, whether learned or ignorant, is a powerful divinity. . . ." (p. 317). "Attendance on Brahman is declared to be the best work of a Sudra: anything else will avail him nothing" (p. 123). "No collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he be able; for a Sudra who has acquired wealth gives pain to the Brahman" (p. 129). "An offering made to Brahman . . . is never spilt; never dries up; is never consumed" (p. 84). "A gift to a non-Brahman yields equal fruit; to a Brahman double; to a learned Brahman a hundred thousand fold; to one who has read all the Vedas endless recompense" (p. 85).

- 77 . . 51 . . The temple of Jagannath is in the province of Orissa, near the sea. Religious ceremonies



are conducted in this temple with the greatest magnificence. The principal idol here is a monstrous shape without arms and head. This temple is peculiar in that here there is no distinction between castes and sects, although the temple is consecrated to Vishnu. Even out-castes enter here, possibly the only such temple in India. Here the crowd of pilgrims and religious fanatics never abates. They bring all sorts of offerings—food-stuffs, gold, silver, jewels, costly cloths, horses, cows, etc.,—which are so large that they suffice to maintain several thousands of persons employed in the temple services. The devotees are promised the fulfillment of any desire here in this most famous temple in all India, if their presents happen to satisfy the cupidity of the wily priests.

78 . . 52 .
101

Swarga is one of the four Abodes of Bliss. The eternal home of the Hindus is shaped like a cone, convoluted like a snail shell and divided into stages—on the north side, Swarga is Indra's paradise, inhabited by gods of the second rank. The famous cow, Kamadhenu, grants abundance of milk and butter to the gods who reside there. All virtuous persons may enter there if they have observed all caste rules and worshipped the Brahmans properly. The second paradise, Kailasa, is for the followers of Siva only, the worshippers of the disgusting lingam. Vainuntha is the third abode, for the devotees of Vishnu, whose food consists of fruit and vegetables. The last and greatest abode of all is Sattya-loka, the place of truth or the abode of virtue. This is the home of Brahmans only. Any other caste people, no matter how pure and religious they may have been, are irrevocably excluded.

79 . . 53 .

Manu, p. 299: "A wife . . . when they have committed faults, may be beaten with a cord or a cane."

80 . . 54 .

The priests are feared so profoundly that they dare go to any extreme to force prosperous farmers to spend all their profits upon feasts and presents for the Brahmans. They themselves, incidentally, receive a goodly share and are of

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course supported throughout their manoeuvrings by the feast-loving, palm-itching Brahmins.

81 . . 55 . . If the priests allowed the vows to go unpaid, they would soon find themselves in serious financial difficulties. The women understand that a vow is serious and they must pay it or face terrible retribution. At all times the priest is ready to stand between them and the offended deity and is anxious to be hired to thwart the impending dire calamities. His price, unfortunately, is not regular but is limited only by the financial possibility.

82 . . 56 . . This is a translation of one of the common names of the Supreme Being—*shrusti kurti*.

CHAPTER X

85 . . 57 . . *Munsiff* is the name of the highest government official in the towns. He is usually the most influential farmer in the district and he is supposed to be responsible for the honours and courtesies shown all travellers. He is required to sell fodder for a traveller's cattle or to provide any other need, as food or water, or coolie help, or oxen and bandies for the travellers, if his townspeople are not willing to help. The opening of his own house for a meeting of course is purely optional and is a real kindness quite often granted.

88 . . 58 . . Debt is contracted for nearly all wedding ceremonies. The poor people who have nothing to mortgage, or no service to render, are often hard pressed to arrange a wedding.

90 . . 59 . . Chuckler is the common name for the outcastes, who work in leather. They are also called serf and untouchables, because they are so low in the social scale that they are denied caste privileges.

CHAPTER XI

96 . . 60 . . A mohur is the name of a gold coin worth fifteen rupees, that is, five dollars. A necklace often is composed of gold and coral beads together with three or more mohurs.

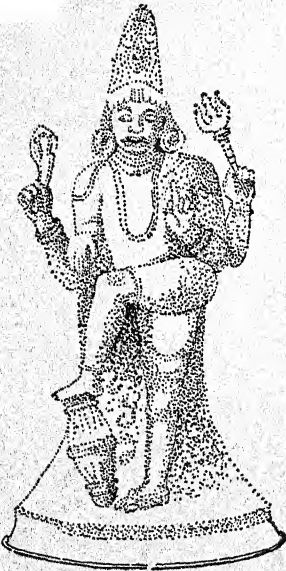
97 . . 61 . . Priests are usually ventriloquists, who conceal themselves in or near the idols and answer the requests of the worshippers when it is to their advantage.

99 . . 62 . . In almost every village and bazaar, this expression is heard daily, "This is our Kali-yuga, our Iron age." The Vedic Rishi, Parasara, in the Vishnu Purana says: "The observance of caste, order and institutes will not prevail in the Kali age. . . . Men of all degrees will conceal themselves to be equal with Brahmans, cows will be held in esteem only as they supply milk. . . . Princes instead of protecting will plunder their subjects. . . . Women will bear children at the age of five, six, or seven years; and men beget them when they are eight, nine, or ten. A man will be gray when he is twelve; and no one will exceed twenty years of life."—Wilson's "Translation of the Puranas," p. 622.

CHAPTER XII

103 . . 63 . . The Hindu gods are sometimes said to commit sin "in sport, or as a divine amusement" (Vedanta-sara, p. 82). With this motive the small-pox goddess is said to scatter the seeds of the disease. When the Hindus manufactured gods, they took as their models their own rajas (kings), only giving them increased powers. The gods have any number of wives and concubines. They quarrel and fight. Krishna stole butter and the clothes of the Gopis. He killed Kansa's washerman in anger and also 180,000 of his own sons. He had eight queens and 16,100 wives. The stories of Krishna do more than anything else to destroy the morals and corrupt the imaginations of Hindu youths. Krishna himself said, "Actions defile me not." The Hindus generally believe that "to the mighty there is no sin."

103 . . 64 . . *Mantrams* are some sort of charms to avert malignant influences. The Hindus are firmly convinced that the gods are in reality evil spirits, who are ever on the watch to harm, harass and torment them and cause plague, sickness, famine



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and disaster, and to impede and mar or injure every good work.

108 . . 65 . . Dung-cakes are made of the dung of the sacred cows, mixed with little sticks and straws. They are much prized as fuel. This custom uses up the fertilizer so that the land suffers.

108 . . 66 . . Caste comes from the Sanskrit word "varna," meaning colour, thus showing that originally the word might have expressed merely the fact that the colour of the different aboriginal tribes and their Aryan conquerors was different. The most ancient lawgiver of the Hindus, Manu, said that there were four chief castes and that there was no fifth caste, thus excluding four-fifths of the population as beneath the rights of religious privileges and beyond the pale of the Supreme Being's care! The late Prof. Max Muller, of Oxford University, considered by the Hindus themselves as the greatest authority on all things Indian, says that there are 3,000 castes to-day in India. None of these 3,000 castes will interdine or intermarry. Could there be a greater obstacle to a nation's progress than this? Could the vivisection of a nation go farther?

109 . . 67 . . Widows are religiously cursed in India. The census reports 14,000 child widows under four years of age. Formerly they were not permitted to marry because of the religious custom that expected them to perform ever-recurring ceremonies for their dead lord. Even to-day a widow devoting her every spare minute to such religious observances is a mark of Hindu gentility and aristocracy. This is because their social life and religious life is one and the same thing. In these days the Hindu conscience is a study. They are ashamed of this custom and yet they will not do away with it. They dare not murder the Hindus who allow their virgin widowed daughters to be remarried, but they persecute them to such an extent that it is only possible for the Hindu who is financially independent, or who has a good government position, to take a widowed child as his wife. These marriages of virgin widows are however increasing in number and popularity every year. In 1908 thirty such

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marriages were reported in all India. Not one widow who is not a virgin has been remarried in India, so far as I have been able to find out. Of course, a widower marries at once whenever or wherever he pleases, whether his wife is dead or living, or even whether she knows about it or not. The older, developed child-widows are the unpaid drudges in their husband's home. The widows of the highest caste have their heads shaved monthly by the barber. They are permitted to wear only one coarse cloth, of one colour. They have but one meal of food a day, and are required to fast fortnightly. The people are often better than their religion and sympathize with them and purposely leave scraps around for them to eat. However, they dare not overlook these unjust, cruel conditions for the widow, because the hand of the god, the only one they know anything about, rests heavily on the selfsame laws.

CHAPTER XIII

- III . . 68 . . Most missionaries have anywhere from 50,000 to 1,400,000 people in their allotted fields, at least in India. The sizes of the fields vary because of some geographical or government division, or of extra station work as a high school, college, or seminary. Most missionaries try to visit every village on their field once a year, but must often fail.
- III . . 69 . . "Is it necessary for caste converts to leave their families?" is a topic worn almost threadbare because of its frequent treatment on almost every program in every Christian convention. The consensus of opinion of all missionaries of all denominations and of the converted caste converts themselves is that it is impossible to live in an orthodox Hindu high-caste home and not take part in idol worship. The persecutions would eventually mean insanity, or death.
- III . . 70 . . The *tulasi* plant is worshipped as the wife of Vishnu. It is a plant found everywhere in sandy and uncultivated places. The Brahmans say that "nothing on earth can equal the virtues of the *tulasi*." Salvation is assured to any one

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who waters and attends to this plant. It is grown in the courtyard of every Brahman house and the women worship it daily. It may have a medicinal property. They use the leaves, which have a sweet, aromatic scent, as a cough medicine and cordial.

112 . . 71 . . Funeral ceremonies are conducted in effigy among the high-caste Hindus, whenever one of their number must be disowned because refusing to conform to caste restrictions. A husband burns in effigy the wife who has deserted him and parents or relatives perform the same ceremony, for one of their number who has become a Christian or Musselman. "An image is made of three hundred and sixty leaves of the holy palasa tree, with a cocoanut representing the head, a plantain leaf for the brow, thirty-two pomegranate seeds for the teeth, two cowry-shells marked with red lead for the eyes, and so on. The effigy is laid upon the skin of a black antelope, and on it is placed a lighted lamp. The soul of the dead man is then charmed into the image, and as the lamp flickers and dies the mourner performs the rite for the departing soul, raises a pyre, cremates the image, and carries out the usual death ceremonies."—"Things Indian," p. 130.

112 . . 72 . . A white cloth handkerchief is an unknown article to the Hindus and its use is considered defilement. However, in large cities they are often seen proudly or conspicuously displayed in the pockets of the Brahmans themselves. But they may not keep them on their person after they have used them. An unused handkerchief, of course, is not defiling to them.

113 . . 73 . . The Hindus believe that their nail parings, or a particle of their clothing, or a lock of hair, or even their name in the possession of an enemy who understands sorcery, can be used so as to make them sick and even cause their death after a great deal of suffering. For this reason every good caste person has three names. One is kept secretly by the priests in the temple, another is written in the horoscopes that are written at the time of their births, and the third is

the common name by which they are known. The women in fear at first will invariably tell you a name that is not even their common name, because they do not want to take any risk with a queer-looking white person.

CHAPTER XIV

- 121 . . 74 . . Nothing taints the soul of the Hindu more effectually than food which has been prepared by a person without his own caste. The anger of the Hindus would know no bounds if they found Sundaramma already defiled by eating food that had been prepared by one inferior to her own caste. Of course Brahmans, being the highest caste, have charge of the public hotels, and can cook for everybody and their cooking is a spiritual help to all castes.
- 122 . . 75 . . "Dog" and "untouchable" are the common names for the outcaste, the unrecognized fifth caste people.—See Note 59.
- 122 . . 76 . . "Weaver" caste is one of the great divisions of the "serfs," the people who are denied caste. It is one of their own distinctions, unrecognized by the Brahmans. As the name implies they live by weaving cloth, and so possibly are a shade more respectable to the higher caste people than the Madigas, the other great division of outcastes, because these latter make leather shoes and leather well-buckets. Taking the life of animals and working in leather is not only obnoxious but most sinful to the high-caste Hindu, who is a vegetarian.

